

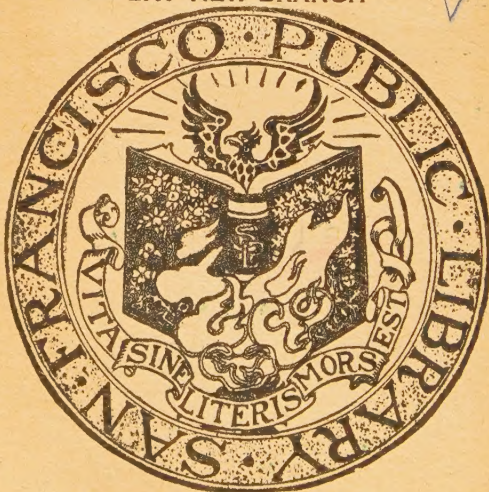


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SHE GIVES THE SHEEP AND LAMBS MAGNIFICENT
COATS OF CURLY WOOL (page 3)

NEW STORIES TO TELL TO CHILDREN

Stories you never have heard

BY
SARA CONE BRYANT
(MRS. THEODORE F. BORST)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FRANK C. PAPÉ

New and Enlarged Edition



BOSTON AND NEW YORK

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New stories to tell
children: stories you
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Drawn by Frank C. Papé



NEW STORIES TO TELL TO CHILDREN

∴

WINTER CLOTHES

THE glossy black Crow sits on the yellow cornstalk and pecks at the few kernels of hard corn left on the one dry ear.

The Maple trees beside the brook are red and pink and yellow.

Under the Apple trees lie a few dark red apples that the pickers left.

Under the Nut trees in the woods the first nuts have fallen. When school is out

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the children will be there. For the big West Wind is blowing cooler and cooler, and colder and colder. And soon the rosy Maple leaves and the golden Beech leaves and the brown Hickory leaves will all lie in heaps on the ground. And the sweet nuts will come raining down and hide in the rifts of leaves.

So the children's mother says, "It is time to get out the Winter clothes."

And she takes out the warm woolen stockings, the knitted sweaters and caps, Johnny's fleece-lined jacket and Sister's thick woolen coat. She buys new worsted mittens and strong high shoes, and rubbers.

In all the city stores and all the country homes people are getting winter clothes ready for winter.

But Mother Nature is busiest of all. She has been working for weeks to fit out her children for the tingling cold days that are to come.

She gives Mr. Gray-Squirrel's family wonderful gray fur coats, thick and soft and

handsome. Last Summer they wore such thin gray clothes that they seemed only half as big as now. Now their tails are long and bushy. Their bodies are coated in deep, thick masses of shining fur. Mother Nature's squirrel children are ready for Winter.

And she gives the sheep and lambs magnificent coats of curly wool. It is so thick no wind can pierce it, and so curly that it mats together against rain or snow or frost. One of the warmest Winter coats in the world is the coat of wool Mother Nature gives the lamb.

She has a great many fine fur coats to get ready. Most of her little four-footed children wear furs in Winter. There are the Bear children, and the Fox children, and oh, dear, I don't know how many others. But every one of them gets a thick, warm, fur coat for Winter; every one. All Mother Nature's animal children who live where Winter is cold have warm Winter clothes.

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Do you think she forgets her plant children? Indeed she does not. Some of them she tucks away under the brown leaf blanket to sleep till Spring comes again.

But some of the others stay out in the cold, and they have very curious Winter coats. One of the most curious coats of all is the one Mother Nature gives the little Fir tree. She gives him a rubber coat!

Yes, it is quite true. The little Fir tree wears a rubber coat all Winter. And so do all his brothers and sisters. And so do all his cousins, the Pine family, and the Spruce family, and all the other Evergreen trees.

Johnny only wears a rubber coat when it rains. It keeps out water, but he would not think it warm enough to keep out cold. Why does the little Fir tree wear a rubber coat in Winter?

The little Fir tree is not so much afraid of cold as of — what? Water? No, of dryness. Let me tell you why.

The little Fir tree lives on water. All Spring, and all Summer, water from the good earth comes rushing up the little Fir tree's roots and through his veins, clear to the topmost twigs and needles. Then the Sunshine and the Winds draw the water to themselves, out of the needles. More water comes from the earth, up through the little Fir tree's trunk and branches, and again the Wind and the Sun draw it out through the needles. Over and over, all the Spring and Summer and early Autumn, the nourishing water flows up through the little Fir tree's body from the earth below to the air above. And as it flows through his body it feeds him and he grows.

But Mother Nature and the little Fir tree know that when Winter comes the earth will freeze. It will be cold and hard and dry. All its water will be ice. No more water can flow into the Fir tree's roots and up his body, to feed him.

So the Fir tree says, "I must keep what I

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have. I cannot give any more water out through my needles to the Sun and Wind. I must keep a little food to live on through the Winter.”

Then Mother Nature puts a rubber coat on the little Fir tree! She fits it tight and thick and hard over every green needle on his branches. The rubber coat covers the little tree in, all over, tight and cozy. And not a bit of water can be pulled through it by the Sun and the Wind. Just as Johnny’s rubber coat keeps the rain out, so the Fir tree’s rubber coat keeps the water in. And the little Fir tree does not dry up and die of thirst, but lives through the cold till the earth melts again.

All the Evergreen trees wear rubber coats in Winter, dark green ones, mostly. And they are very happy. The snow may fall and the winds may blow, but Mother Nature’s children are dressed for the season, and each one has just the right kind of Winter clothes.



MOTHER HOTTY AND THE LITTLE HOTTIES

DID you ever hear about old Mother Hotty who lives in the furnace, and the little Hotties who play in the steam pipes? No? Then I'll tell you about them.

It was a cold, cold day. There were frost pictures all over the window panes, and the snow *creaked* outside when the milkman's cart came along with Gordy's breakfast milk.

So Gordy's Daddy got up early and put on his big gray dressing gown, the thick wooly one, and his high warm slippers, and

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went down to the cellar to 'tend to Mother Hotty.

Mother Hotty was all dark and sleepy and still, in the steam heater in the cellar, hardly breathing, and not winking at all. And not a sound of any of the little Hotties came from the pipes.

But Daddy could hear the Coldies, all about the place, snapping their fingers and cracking their joints. He knew they had been up to tricks, and were pleased with themselves.

So Gordy's Daddy took the shaker and gave Mrs. Hotty a good waking up; that is the way Mother Hotty likes folks to say "Good morning" to her.

And as soon as he had got her waked up a little, he gave her a big breakfast of four shovelfuls of coal from the coal bin, and a drink of water. And then he gave her a breath of fresh air to help her digest her breakfast. And then he came upstairs to bed, to wait a while.

Mother Hotty stirred a bit and drew a few deep breaths. Then she began to warm up to the day's work. Her eyes blinked once or twice. Then they twinkled. Then they shone. Then they gleamed. Her heart grew warmer and warmer, her breath came deeper and faster.

And now Mother Hotty was at her day's work of warming up Gordy's House. She began to *hum-m-m-m*, and then she gave her orders, in a bubbling, comfortable, busy voice:

"Here, you, here, you, here, you!! Every little Hotty at his post, now! Where are the Scouts? Up in your own pipe, every one of you! Scouts, go ahead to clear the way. This is a fine morning for those Coldies to be about. I'll wager they've got their tricks and their barricades up. Get at it, now! Clear the pipes!"

Up sprang the little Hotties, the Scout Hotties ahead, the smaller Hotties next; and every one had his little hammer stick-

ing out of his hip pocket. Into every steam pipe they leaped, and the fun began.

Gordy heard them from his bed. *Snip, snap*, from somewhere in his walls. That was Ginger Hotty hurrying so fast that he dropped his hammer.

Then *tap, tap, TAP, TAP*. Louder, louder — a regular knocking and banging began all over the place. That was the Hotties, hammering away at the barricades the Coldies had built up during the night. Knock, knock, crash, bang!

Down came the barricades. And the little Hotties muttered and gossiped in their satisfaction. Gordy heard them plainly.

They swarmed up the pipes and crowded into the radiators, crowding and pushing, and giggling in choppy, gurgling laughs. Good little Hotties!

Gordy could hear them gurgling and giggling in his radiator. Then he heard such a bang! Bang, bang, *bang, bing!* It sounded like a regular fight, in his radiator.

And that is what it was. The Scout Hotty had caught two of the Coldies who had been putting up barricades.

"Push 'em, push 'em, throw 'em out!" said Scout to the small brothers behind him. And how they did push and crowd! The Coldies pushed and crowded back at them. It was a grand fight.

Gordy sat up in his warm white bed. Then he thought he would like to take a hand. So he jumped out of bed and ran across the floor in his bare pink feet and unscrewed the little cap on the safety-cock of the steam radiator.

"*Pouf, pouf, kebumps!*" Out came the two Coldies, head over heels, one after the other, almost into Gordy's face! The Hotties had thrown them out.

And *how* the Hotties laughed! They chuckled loud and deep and long, till the whole radiator was just one chuckle.

Gordy stared into the air where the Coldies had come out. But he caught

only one tiny glimpse. That was all. The Coldies had run away through the windows to their mates outside.

But one little Hotty had fallen out behind them. In his haste and his hard pushing he had gone too far, and out he came! Gordy heard the tiny gasp he gave, and quite plainly he saw his little white shirt as he jumped. And quite plainly he felt the Hotty's warm moist breath on his own fat fingers.

But that was all. For next second, Ginger Hotty — it *was* Ginger Hotty of course — had twinkled himself down the stairs into the cellar and back to Mother Hotty's pipes. He had no mind to be left out of any fun.

So Gordy put the cock back on again, for fear more Hotties might tumble out. And over the floor he ran fast to his bed. The Coldies had been sweeping his floor all night with chilly brooms, and it was mis-*abul* to feel.



OUT CAME THE TWO COLDIES, HEAD OVER HEELS

But it couldn't stay cold long now. For in every pipe in the house the Hotty children had broken the barricades and thrown out the Coldies, and now they were running up and down, bringing the warmness from Mother Hotty's oven, and scattering great waves of it all over the house — the walls, the ceilings, the floors.

Warmer and nicer and more comfy it felt every minute. In the radiators you could hear a quiet, contented little whistle. The Hotties always whistle very softly to themselves when they have got the better of the Coldies, and are bringing up the warmness.

Down in the cellar you could hear Mother Hotty's warm, faithful heart beating peacefully, and once in a while she chuckled, low and comfortably.

Gordy's house was all warmed up.



Gordy's New Year's Dinner Party

It snowed on New Year's Eve. The flakes came fine and thick almost like fog. And looking out the window, Gordy could see the motor lights sending rays in every direction, like fireworks.

It snowed all night, too, steady, thick, and hard. When Gordy woke up, New Year's morning, the great soft flakes were coming down just as if "Mother Holle" had really shaken out her feather bed, like the old story.

Mother said, "I think it will clear before dinner; the flakes are so big."

But Daddy said, "We'll see."

And Dickie said, "I wonder what the Squirrels will eat, to-day? It must be three feet deep, down to their acorns."

"The birds, too," said Daddy. "They'll be scouting for food to-day."

"We must feed them," said Mother. "Dorothy can get crusts for them."

"No! Me!" said Gordy instantly. "Me will get crusts. Fanny will get me crusts!"

If you could only once see Gordy, you would know why the family laughed. Gordy stands straighter than any other four-year-old boy in the world, I guess. And his eyes are the bluest and his hair the curliest, and he holds his chin up, and his face is always just ready to laugh. But most of all, he looks so determined! He makes you think of a tiny little steam engine with steam enough to run a great big train.

So the family laughed. But Dorothy said, "Of course you shall, Gordy. Dorothy will help you."

“No! Me’s Fanny will help me.”

Gordy was very determined, indeed. So Daddy said to let him get the birds’ dinner all by himself, and as soon as it cleared a little he might put on his big coat and leggings and scatter the crusts in the snow.

After breakfast Gordy disappeared into the kitchen and was very quiet. Mother was busy dressing up the rooms for company, Dick went to help Daddy shovel the walks, and Dorothy promised to make her own room look pretty.

Gordy was happy. Fanny let him fuss around the bread box and take out every small piece, and the hard pieces she was going to dry in the oven. And she gave him two dry doughnuts and a tin dish, and told him to break the doughnuts in small bits. And she found him what she called a “chunk o’ fat” and told him to cut that up.

Fanny was big, and sweet-tempered, and just the color of chocolate candy.

So by and by Gordy had a whole dish full of nice-looking pieces of food.

And then the Sun came out! All the round world was suddenly glistening, gleaming, white and blue. And as far as you could see, nothing but snow. The trees were wrapped in it, the fences all folded up in it.

Fanny helped Gordy into his coat and leggings and rubbers and cap, and out he went with his dish.

But when he stepped outside the door, he was in a queer kind of tunnel. Where Daddy and Dick had dug the path it was like a little road between two banks. The snow-sides came up to Gordy's shoulder.

Gordy had made up his mind to spread the birds' dinner under the Oak tree in front of the dining-room window, because that was where the Bluejays and the Squirrels came so often for acorns.

"Help me up, Daddy, help me up, please!" he called, in his funny little determined voice.

Daddy lifted him up over the bank, and said, "Maybe it will hold you, Sonny; there's quite a crust. Try it, now?"

Gordy stepped out boldly. Daddy held him, letting his weight come down on the snow gently. The crust did hold him up.

So there was Gordy, up high on the snow mountain, under the dining-room windows. He had a wonderful time. He placed the pieces of doughnut in a row, and the pieces of bread in a row, and the pieces of fat in a row. The rows spread out across the snow as far as the whole dining-room windows. The snow table was quite covered with dinner!

Gordy was as rosy as an apple when Daddy and Dick finally took him back in the house after their digging was done. Mother was ready to give him his bath and put on his new white suit with the blue tie, for dinner. He kept telling her about the birds' dinner in the snow, all the time she

was soaping him and drying him. Mother was interested.

As soon as he was dressed, Gordy went straight to the dining-room window and waited for the birds to come to their dinner. But no birds were in sight. He waited and waited. Johnny Sullivan went by, dragging a sled with a bundle on it. Then the snowplow went by, with the big, big horse holding his head down and lifting his feet high, and the man behind almost tumbling over as the plow slipped sidewise. By and by the minister went by, on his way to Aunt Minnie's, to dinner.

But no birds came. Gordy was dreadfully disappointed. "*F-why* don't they come to my crusts, Fanny?" he said.

Fanny was putting the cranberry sauce on the table in a shiny glass dish. She stood back to see how it looked, and then moved the dish a little. "There," she said, "that looks nice." Then she said,

"What did you say, Gordy? Oh, the

birds'll be coming when it's time. Most likely they have their own dinner-time for New Year's, like us. You just wait."

Gordy waited. But dinner-time came, and the company came, — which was Mr. and Mrs. Thurlow and Gertrude, and Gordy loved them very much, — but still no birds came to the snow table. Gordy got really excited about it.

But when he was in his high chair at the table, and Daddy had begun to serve roast goose and cranberry sauce, Gordy forgot about his disappointment for a while. His own dinner was so interesting. And then, when everybody had eaten plates and plates full of roast goose and cranberry sauce and sweet potato and baked onions and hot rolls — and Fanny was taking all these things away — just before dessert, Mrs. Thurlow went out of the room for a minute and came back with boxes and parcels, tied in ribbon. There was a gay present for everybody. And Gordy's was

a signal tower for his new electric train! So really, he couldn't think of anything the least bit disappointing.

But when he was eating his ice-cream he did think of the birds' dinner. "*F-why* didn't the birds come?" he asked suddenly.

Fanny was just passing coffee cups to the grown-ups as Gordy spoke, and she glanced out of the window. Her eyes suddenly showed large whites.

"My sakes, Mis' Hall," she exclaimed. "Do look what's here, at Gordy's dinner party!"

Mrs. Hall stood up and looked out. Then she put her finger to her lips. "Sh!" she said. "Everybody come here. But don't make a noise. Look out of the window!"

Fanny lifted Gordy from his high chair and set him down close to the window, and all the grown-ups crowded around.

Gordy took one look, and then his little face broke into a merry, satisfied smile.

"They've came!" he said. "They've all came to my dinner!"

Outside on the snow Gordy's company were busily eating their New Year's dinner. And who do you think they were? Listen!

There were *three* Squirrels, two big, plump gray ones and one small, plump gray one. There were *two* Bluejays, both big, plump, blue-coated ones. There were *two* English Pheasants, one very big and grand, the other very lady-like in a modest brown suit. And last of all, shyly by herself under the barberry hedge, was a speckly, round, fat baby Quail! And they were *all* eating Gordy's crumbs!

As the people inside stood looking, the littlest Squirrel sat up on his haunches, facing them. He lifted a big, three-cornered piece of bread in his little white-mittened paws and began to nibble.

"Oh, my! Isn't he cunning!" gasped Dorothy.

"He's blowing his horn, Muvver, he's blowing his horn!" shouted Gordy.

And everybody began to laugh. For it

looked exactly like that. The little Squirrel looked like a tiny musician in a white vest, blowing a cornet with all his might.

"He's playing a tune to celebrate your party, Gordy," said Daddy. "See how he puffs out his cheeks!"

"Oh, he is, he is!" said Gordy, and he danced up and down. "He's playing a tune for me's party!"

It was a wonder the noise and the laughing didn't frighten away the company outside. But it didn't. The Pheasants walked dippingly about, eating politely. The Squirrels darted back and forth, getting pieces and then nibbling them. The Blue-jays kept a bit by themselves, because the Pheasants were bigger than they. And the dear little fat Quail kept herself *to* herself, but ate away, eagerly.

It was a happy New Year's Dinner inside the house and a happy New Year's Dinner out on the snow. The happiest New Year's Dinner Gordy had ever had.



TEDDY BEAR AND THE MUD-PIE MASK

ONCE there was a little Teddy Bear who was very fond of honey. He loved to go softly on his paddy paws through the woods till he came to a Honey Bees' nest and steal the honey.

Teddy Bear knew where there was a big lot of honey hidden in a tree. But he did not dare to go and steal it because he knew what the Honey Bees would do to him if he did. He had found out last time. They would come z-z-i-p! and sting him dreadfully on his tender nose. Teddy remembered just how it felt from last time.

Honey Bees know how to hurt Teddy Bears. The Teddy Bears have thick, thick fur all over their round selves, and they can't easily be hurt through the fur. But their snouts and ears aren't covered with fur, and they are *very* tender.

Teddy Bear thought and thought how he could get the honey without getting stung on the nose. And by and by he thought of a plan.

He trotted down to the brook where there was some nice soft mud, the kind that makes the best mud pies. It was clayey, sticky mud, the sort that bakes quite hard if you leave it in the sun, and really looks like pies and cake.

When he got there Teddy Bear made a soft, mushy mixing of mud with his paddy paws, and then he plastered it all over his nose. All over his nose, around his eyes, around his mouth, and around the breathe-holes in his nose, he plastered it. And when he got it all thick over his face, with

only a tiny hole left at the mouth to stick his tongue out of, and only the tiny breathe-holes left at his nose to breathe with, he went and sat down on a stone in the sun, to dry.

He held his head up in the sun, and kept his mouth and nose very still, so that the mud might dry all over his nose and not crack. And he thought to himself, "Now I've got a mask, a mud-pie mask. The Honey Bees can't sting through that, and I'll run fast through the bushes and brush the rest off me."

So he sat and sat in the sun, very stiff and still, drying his mud-pie mask.

After a while, along came Bunny Rabbit hopping and flopping. And he took a look at Teddy Bear and he said,

"My goodness, Teddy, what you got on your nose?"

Teddy Bear turned his head very carefully and very stiffly to look at Bunny Rabbit. He wanted to say, "Don't bother

me, I am drying my mask." But he did not want to crack his mud-pie mask, so he held his mouth very tight like this, and said,

"D-m-b-b-b-m-m-m!"

"He, he, he!" said Bunny, "what are you making such a funny face for?"

"M-m-m-b-b-b-m-m-m!" said Teddy, quite crossly, and very squintily and stiffly.

"O, ho, ho, ho!" giggled Bunny Rabbit, and he came up close to Teddy. "What in the world are you doing? What's on your face?"

Teddy *was* cross then. He scowled, and said, "G-w-h-l-m-n," and other funny sounds that didn't mean anything.

He looked so queer and sounded so queer, that Bunny began to roll over and over on the ground and shout with laughter. "O, ho, ho, ho! O, ha, ha, ha!" he said. "You sound like Ma's tea-kettle, boiling over, and you look like a loaf of brown bread! O, ho, ho, ho!"

My, how cross Teddy Bear was! He

had a peppery temper, though he was a jolly little soul. And his temper grew very hot indeed when Bunny laughed at him. He got right up and started down the bank after Bunny.

Bunny saw business in Teddy's eye, and he got up *quick* and gave a big jump to run away. But he had been laughing so hard that he had forgotten where he was, and he jumped right into the soft mud and water at the edge of the brook.

It went all over him. He was splashed from head to tail with thick, soft, mud-pie mud. It went into his eyes and made him blink, and in his nose and made him sneeze, "kerchow, kerchim!"

When Teddy Bear saw Bunny all splashed over and sneezing, "kerchow, kerchim," he stopped being cross and began to laugh.

He knew he mustn't laugh, because it would crack his mud-pie mask. But the more he wanted not to laugh, the more he

had to laugh. He held his mouth stiff and giggled "hm-hm-hm" and put his paddy paws up to his cheeks to keep his mouth from grinning. But Bunny Rabbit said "kerchim" again and Teddy Bear's little fat sides shook the laugh right out of his mouth. "Ha, ha, ha, he, he, he," said Teddy Bear.

Of course the mud-pie mask cracked then, and pieces dropped off, and that looked so funny that Bunny Rabbit stopped sneezing and began to laugh again.

At that, Teddy Bear had to laugh harder because Bunny had a patch of mud over one eye and he looked like a comic Valentine.

So in a minute Bunny and Teddy were both holding their fur jackets at the belt, and rolling about, shouting "Ho, ho, ho, ha, ha, ha!"

That was the end of the mud-pie mask. It all dropped off, and left only a dirty little face on Teddy Bear, which was quite as usual.

So after Bunny went home, hopping and flopping, Teddy began all over again. He made a soft mushy mixing of mud and water and patted it carefully on to his nose again, and sat down in the sun to dry. This time he was careful to sit in a lonely spot, and no one came along to make him laugh. After a while the mud dried hard. Teddy could feel from the stiffness and the tightness that it was quite hard.

“Now I’ve got a mask, and now I’ll have some honey,” he thought.

And he trotted off down the forest path to the Honey Bees’ tree. When he got close, he went ever so softly on his paddy paws. And ever so softly he put in one paddy paw and got a great sticky, delicious pawful of honey. And out of the tiny hole left at his mouth he stuck his sharp little pink tongue and licked the honey off his paddy paw.

It was oh, so good! So sweet! Teddy licked his paw quite clean and was just

poking in after some more, when the Honey Bees woke up.

“Z-z-z-ip!” out they came, and off went Teddy!

“Z-z-z,” they settled on his back and on his shoulders, but most of all they settled on his nose. And they stung and stung. But they couldn’t get through the mud-pie mask. The harder they tried to sting the more tired they got for their pains.

Then Teddy Bear came home to his Mother. He was so pleased with himself and the good taste of honey in his mouth that he would have laughed out loud, only he couldn’t! Because by this time the mud-pie mask had dried very hard and it stuck tight.

When Teddy came to his house his Mother stopped feeding the baby and looked at him.

“What’s the matter with your face?” she said.

"M-n-n-n-m," said Teddy eagerly.

"What!" said his Mother.

"M-n-m-n-m-n," he said.

"*What!!*" said his Mother, louder.

Teddy Bear tried to speak. He stuck up his little snout and tried his best to tell her about the mud-pie mask and the bees and the honey. But the only sounds he could make through the tiny hole at his mouth were,

"Gh-w-m-sh!" or something like that.

"Don't you stick up your nose at me!" said his Mother. "What are you talking about?"

"M-n-w-h-z-z!" said Teddy, blinking his eyes and twisting his head about.

"You saucy boy! I'll teach you to make faces at your Mother!" said Mother Bear, and she reached out with her big handy paw, and boxed his right ear.

Crack! Off went the right half of the mud-pie mask, as clean as a nut shell. And half of Teddy Bear's funny little face was clear.

"I got honey, Ma," Teddy said out of the right side of his mouth.

"What?" said his Mother. "What have you got on your face? I've a good mind to box your other ear."

Teddy Bear put up his paddy paw and boxed his own face on the left side. Off fell the rest of the mask, and he was himself again.

Then he told his Mother all about it. And Mother Bear laughed and laughed. And she said, to-morrow, they'd both go down to the brook and get themselves both fixed up with mud-pie masks, and go honey-hunting.

And I guess they did.



MR. GRAY-SQUIRREL TALKS

JUST outside Jimmie's window there is a branch of the White Oak tree. The White Oak tree grows in the front yard, close to the path. And just outside Mother's window is a branch of the Red Oak tree. The Red Oak tree grows in the front yard, close to the veranda.

Both the Red Oak tree and the White Oak tree bear acorns. The acorns are small and brown and sweet. In the autumn the whole front lawn is covered with them, shiny and brown.

In Jimmie's house four people live. They

are Mother and Father, and Elizabeth and Jimmie.

In the oak trees live four squirrels, Mr. Gray-Squirrel, Mrs. Gray-Squirrel, Fluffy Tail Gray-Squirrel, and Bright Eyes Gray-Squirrel.

Everybody in the house loves the Squirrel family. They all like to watch Mr. Gray-Squirrel run about on the lawn. He picks up an acorn in his two front paws. Then he runs up the Red Oak tree, and sits on the branch over the veranda. Then he takes the acorn in both paws and nibbles at it, turning it in his paws. *Crack, crack*, goes the shiny brown shell, and Mr. Gray-Squirrel's sharp teeth are in the sweet kernel. Then he drops the broken shell to the ground, and eats the kernel.

All the broken shells lie on the ground with the shiny acorns that aren't broken. Before the snow comes, Jimmie's lawn becomes very untidy. It looks like the wild woods.

One day Jimmie could not go to school, because he sneezed too much. It was a very warm day in September, and all the windows were open. Jimmie sat in his big chair by his window, and studied his French. Outside, on the branch, Mr. Gray-Squirrel sat, cracking an acorn. *Crack, crack*, went the shell. And then Mr. Gray-Squirrel let it fall on the grass.

"There you go," said Jimmie to Mr. Gray-Squirrel, "dropping your old shells all over my grass! How can I keep my lawn tidy if you do that?"

Mr. Gray-Squirrel finished eating the kernel. Then he turned his bright dark eyes on Jimmie. And he spoke in a very sharp voice.

"*Your* grass?" he said. "What did you plant your grass on my ground for?"

"*Your* ground?" said Jimmie. "I guess it's my ground in my own yard."

"It isn't your yard," said Mr. Gray-Squirrel sitting up very straight. "It's my

yard. I owned it a long time before you came."

"Why, the idea!" said Jimmie. "My father bought the land and built this house. It is our home."

"It was my home first," said the squirrel. "And it was a nicer home before you all came and spoiled it. I had four more Oak trees, then, all full of acorns. You cut the trees down and carried them away. Did you ever ask me if you might? *Did* you?"

"Well, I never!" said Jimmie.

"And I had other trees," said the Gray-Squirrel, very fast and loud. "I had Hickory-nut trees and a Chestnut tree. And it was nice and quiet, it was. No children, and cats, and automobiles. Did you ever ask me if you might come here? *Did* you?"

Jimmie was so surprised that he said nothing. But Mr. Gray-Squirrel had plenty to say.

"My house was just where your house

is now," he said. "And you tore it down and built yours. Did you ever ask me if you might? *Did* you?"

Jimmie stared.

"The ground was full of places to hide nuts in," said the Squirrel. "And I had private roads to every part of my estate. Then you came, and cleared off all the bushes, and smoothed off all the ground, and planted grass on it! *Grass!* Did I ever tell you you could plant grass? *Did* I?"

By this time Jimmie had caught his breath.

"My," he said. "You talk like a Landlord!"

"I *was* lord of the land," said the Gray-Squirrel. "Everything was mine. But not now. Now you have taken it. And you never asked me. And why? Because you're big, and I'm little, that's why!"

This time the Squirrel's voice was not high and cross, but very sad. And Jimmie's tender heart was touched.

"Don't feel bad, little chap," he said. "You are little and we are big, but we never meant to steal your home. We didn't know about you."

The Gray-Squirrel blinked at Jimmie. He did not answer.

"Don't you like us at all?" said Jimmie, coaxingly. "You know we love you. We never rake up the acorns, even to make the yard look tidy. And we never let the dogs chase you. And we always put crusts on the snow when it is too deep for you to dig through."

Mr. Gray-Squirrel jerked his tail from his back and ran close up to Jimmie's window.

"I know you do," he said. "You put out nuts and fat last winter, after the ice storm, when the woods folks were starving. And you always say 'good morning' to me, so politely. I spoke too hastily. Please excuse me?"

"Please excuse *me*," said Jimmie. "I

spoke hastily first. And really, Mr. Gray-Squirrel, our home is much nicer because you are here. We love to see you and talk to you."

"To tell the truth," said the Gray-Squirrel, "my home is much nicer, too, because you are here. We Squirrels love to see children about; we like to look in the windows and watch you around the fire. And we thank you for your kind care in the long winter. You are welcome to my home."

"And you are welcome to mine," said Jimmie. "Au revoir, little Landlord."

"Au revoir, big Jimmie," said Gray-Squirrel. And off he darted, for another acorn.



BLIND MAJOR

BLIND MAJOR lives on a farm. Every warm sunny morning, kind Gusto leads him out of his stall, after breakfast, and leads him to the trough, for a drink. Then Gusto's little dark-eyed boy says, "Come on, Major," and leads him up the hill to the orchard.

There he pats the dear old horse, and says, "Good-bye, Major. Have a good day." And the little boy goes away.

Blind Major stands still and listens. He feels the warm sun, he hears the crickets chirp, he smells the delicious apples. Carefully he steps in the soft short grass, and comes under an apple tree.

He puts his nose down in the grass and sniffs. Then he picks up a good apple; blind Major never picks up a bad apple. He eats the good apple, and then another. By and by he walks carefully over to another tree, and there he eats another kind of apple, more spicy. Blind Major is happy.

Now the old horse has had enough dessert for his breakfast. He takes a walk. Up the hill he goes, following the narrow paths the workmen have made. The paths lead between beds of costly plants. No one has to watch Major. He does not step into any bed, or crush any plant. He feels the sides of the path and the edges of the beds, and he walks carefully, carefully, along the paths. He turns corners, too, but never does he walk among the plants.

All the long summer day Major wanders over the farm. He likes best to stay on the hill, where the wind is fresh and the sun is warm and the smells of fruit and flower are sweetest. He eats the young clover and the

bits of tender grass. But most of all he likes to eat the apples.

Major has lived on the farm for twenty years. He was there when Gusto's employer bought the farm. And Major was a young strong horse then. But he was blind. All the other horses on the farm were sold, and better ones were bought for the new kind of farming. But when the new owner saw Major's blind eyes he said, "We will keep this horse, for if we sell him he may be abused."

So Major stayed, and learned the new work.

And soon everybody on the farm began to love him. For he had a great heart in his great body.

He trusted his driver. He knew that the hand on the reins was guiding him safely. And on into the darkness he stepped, strongly, bravely, going always where he was asked to go. He never hung back, and seldom did he stumble.

And Major always did his best. A word was enough. "Now, Major," his driver would say, "Come up, Major." And Major would set his mighty body to pull, and with all his heart. No load was ever too heavy for Major if his driver asked him to pull it.

Blind Major has never felt a whip. He knows no rough words, no ugly shouts.

At last Major grew old, and his owner said, "The old horse must not do any more heavy work."

So for a few years Major drew a light cart full of plants back and forth on the farms. He stood still while the workmen planted. Then he drew the cart back with the tools in it. Blind Major was happy.

Then Major got hurt. One Sunday he was in the pasture with the other horses, and a great, black, new horse began to roll and play. Then he got cross about something, and kicked out with his terrible great hoofs. The other horses kept away,

but blind Major did not know. And the terrible hoof struck the old horse in the thigh and cut a deep gash.

Just at that minute the owner and his wife walked up to the pasture gate. They saw the black horse kicking and plunging. They saw poor Major streaming blood.

Major's owner jumped the fence and led Major out of danger. Then he walked right up to the great plunging black horse, while the lady ran for the farm men. Soon they had the black horse locked up, and blind Major was being cared for. The lady cried, and the children cried.

But Major got well, although he was lame for a long time. Of course the wild black horse was sent away.

Now the time came when Major was too old to work.

The Veterinarian said, "Better kill him."

But Gusto said, "Kill Major? He good horse, kind horse. Why should he die?"

Gusto's little dark-eyed boy cried, and

said, "I have fifteen dollars in the bank. Let me buy Major!"

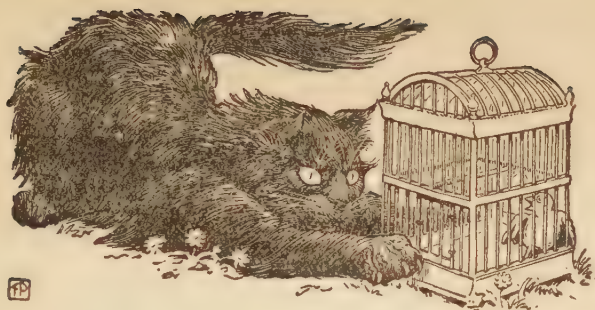
And the children said, "Oh, no! We'll never kill Major."

And the owner said, "Major deserves a happy old age. He has served others all his life. We will not grudge him his food and shelter now."

So blind Major is having his happy old age. His face looks so kind, so wise! And his body is not thin. Only he must move slowly and the days of his youth are far away.

For him the sun is warm and the grass is sweet. The stable at night is a welcome rest. And to him every voice is gentle.

Blind Major is happy.



BOBBY BLUEBIRD'S ADVENTURES

ONCE there was a fluffy baby Bluebird, and his name was Bobby. And he lived with his mother and brothers and sisters in a Bluebird apartment house, on the top floor. The apartment house was built in a tall pine tree that stood in a long row of tall pine trees, out in the beautiful country.

In the second floor apartment was a big family of Starlings, and goodness knows who lived in the other apartments! Bobby did not know any of them, because Bobby had never yet hopped outside his own door.

The Bluebird home was a nice home, warm and neat, and full of jolly chirpings from the babies. Breakfast and dinner

time came along pretty often, and at sleepy time there was the most wonderful down puff to sleep in, — Mother Bluebird's warm breast and wings.

One day when Mother Bluebird had gone to market, Bobby's brother Biggie scrambled and slid out of the nursery into the hall. He was unsteady on his feet, but he managed. And then Bobby heard him squeaking with surprise.

"Look, just look!" he was saying in a wobbly, baby voice.

Bobby scrambled and slid too. He was stronger on his feet; Mother Bluebird had told him she thought he would be the first to fly.

So Bobby came to the door of home — and oh, what a bright light blinded him! He did wink and blink. By and by he saw far out into the world. And it was all blue! Blue with gold and green splashes! Somewhere down below it was green, but in the air, where Bluebirds' roads are, it

was blue. "Oh! oh!" squeaked Bobby, excited as Biggie. "Let's go out."

"No, we can't," sputtered Biggie. "We can't fly yet. Mummie said to wait."

"Oh yes, so she did," said Bobbie. "My, isn't it nice! Won't it be fun! What do you suppose that is over there?"

Far away across the blue was something gorgeous that turned slowly. Both Bluebirds looked hard at it. And just then it turned so they saw it plainly. It was a big shiny bird, four times bigger than Mother or even Father. It stood proudly in the air, on some kind of perch.

The Baby Bluebirds did not know it was Mr. Weathercock, who is made out of tin. They thought he was alive, and with all their little hearts they admired his shining feathers.

"Let *me* see; let *me* see!" came another squeaky little voice. And there was Tiny, wobbling and pushing.

"Oh, oh!" said Biggie, suddenly. "Don't push so! I'm almost over the door sill!"

He crowded himself back, — and stepped on Tiny's toes. Tiny squealed and hopped. She bumped Biggie, Biggie bumped Bobby, and pouf! Bobby was falling through the air, all the way down from the top-floor apartment.

Inside his little head as he shot downward something said, "Use your wings, use your wings." And with all his might he spread and fluttered the mites of wings that had begun to grow.

That saved his life, but it did not save him a very fast journey and a very sudden landing. He came down on the ground with a good deal of a thud, and not much breath left in him.

"Dear me!" he thought, "I hope flying isn't like this!"

And there he was, miles from home, down on the grass; everything strange about him. For a few minutes he crouched quite still, just as he had landed, blinking dizzily, and breathing very fast.

Then he thought he had better go back. He lifted his wings and fluttered bravely. But nothing happened. He toddled along a little way, trying this wing and that, hoping to get a start. No, his wings didn't work; they weren't strong enough.

Dear, dear! How in the world was he to get up all those air stairs to the home door? And what would happen to him if he didn't?

Mother had talked of a CAT, some kind of big fierce creature that made dinners of Baby Birds; a ground creature too, and here he was, helplessly on the ground. Mother had said, "The CAT can climb but he cannot fly. Fly when he chases you." But now poor Bobby could not fly.

And just then something came down from above, closed all round him, and lifted him up. Oh, how terrified he was! His heart stopped, then beat so fast, so fast! Was this a CAT?

He dared not look, he dared not breathe. But after a minute he began to feel

calmer; nothing was hurting him; what held him was soft, warm and very gentle, quite comfortable.

Then he heard voices, not bird voices, nor squirrel voices, — what kind of voices? He knew. It was Folks. Mother had told him about Folks. You need not hide unless they had long sticks under their arms. Folks were talking.

Bobby listened. He could not make it out, but it did not sound frightening. One voice was soft and high, the other was low and deep. Maybe it was a Father Folks and a Mother Folks.

Quite a long time Bobby cuddled very still in the hand that held him so gently, while the voices talked.

Then, very carefully, two smaller hands took him from the hand that held him, and two big, soft, kind eyes looked into his.

Not a chirp did Bobby say. He was not frightened any more, but he wondered.

By and by the deep-talking one came

back. He was dragging a long, long heavy thing. He put the long thing up against the tree where Bobby's apartment was; it reached way up in the branches.

Then he took Bobby most gently in his hand again, and began to climb the long thing.

Then Bobby knew! The hand was taking him home! He cuddled down, content and glad, and watched the world grow higher.

Step after step up they went. And then they had come to the end of the climbing thing. The hand suddenly put Bobby in a queer dark nest (it was a pocket), and for a minute they swung and scrambled; down on the ground the soft high voice said "Oh!" in a frightened way.

Then the hand took Bobby out into the light again. Bobby looked — he was looking straight into the Pine Tree trunk, and into the door of the second story apartment. Up above he could see his own home door.

How good, how good to be home! — but what was this? For mercy's sake! Before Bobby could so much as say "I live on the *top* floor," or something like that, the hand had thrust him through the door of Mrs. Starling's apartment, and dropped him in her dining-room!

Yes, in Mrs. Starling's dining-room! He, who had never spoken to another bird except the family; he who was hardly big enough to know his manners; in Mrs. Starling's dining-room!

He landed all anyhow, feet and feathers, kerplump. And just as soon as he could see anything, for excitement, he saw Starlings. Big Starlings, little Starlings, middle-sized Starlings, all staring at him with round bright eyes, and open mouths and ruffled feathers. He looked at them; he had nothing to say. They looked at him.

And then Mrs. Starling pushed three or four of her children one side and stepped up to him. "What are you doing here —

what does this mean — why are you intruding in my house?" she said all in one breath, in a shrill scolding tone.

Bobby opened his mouth twice, but no words came. He did not know any words that would explain about the hand and the wrong door, and all that.

"If your mother thinks she can put a Bluebird in here for me to feed, and I'll not know the difference," said Mrs. Starling more shrilly, "she's very much mistaken. I know my own children, I do, and I've quite enough of them to feed as it is. Why don't you say something, you fat silly little thing?"

Once more Bobby opened his mouth but only a frightened squeak came out.

"Go right out, go back out where you came from," said Mrs. Starling, giving Bobby a push.

Oh, dear! Oh, dear! She was so much bigger and stronger than Bobby that he was shoved and pushed along in spite of

himself. He thought despairingly of the open door and the miles of air to the ground. And the CAT.

But thinking was of no use. Mrs. Starling shoved and scolded and slapped with her wings, and next instant he was popping out the door like a cork from a bottle, and then he was shooting down through the air again. And in the door behind him as he fell, he caught a glimpse of Mrs. Starling, with such an expression on her face! She was saying, "The idea! A Bluebird in *my* dining-room."

Whish! down he fell. But this time he had had some practice, so he got his wing-lets working sooner, and came to the ground not quite so suddenly.

But it was very upsetting; here he was way down on the ground once more. No home, no supper, and how about CATS?

The human folks came swiftly up to him. They were making the strangest noises, something like this, "Hahaha! Hahaha!"

"We put him in the wrong nest, the poor little soul. Did you ever see such an expression as that Starling wore?"

Bobby could not understand what the human folks said, but he felt sure they were friends. Only he did hope they wouldn't try to put him back in Mrs. Starling's dining-room.

They didn't; they thought of something much better. One of them went away, and pretty soon she came back with a queer something in her hands.

"Let us put him in Eleanor's old canary cage," she said. "Then the cat can't get him, and perhaps the mother bird will find him."

It was too bad Bobby didn't know English, for it would have saved him much worry. The deep-talking one set the queer thing on the ground, and gently lifting Bobby Bluebird, put him inside, and shut the little door.

Bobby was in a little house, about as big

as home, but not nearly so safe-feeling and warm. It was all open though he couldn't get out. There was a roof on it too.

Bobby looked about him with his bright eyes. The world was all so strange to-day that he forgot to feel frightened; he only felt interested, and a little fast in his breath. In one corner was something soft and fluffy; he looked at it with his head on one side; it was a bed for sleepy time. That's what it was. But oh, what a strange sleepy time it would be without Mother!

Suddenly Bobby heard a sound, — a heavenly sound of comfort and home: Mother Bluebird's call.

"Tweep, tweep," he called back with all his lungs. "I'm down here, Mother, I'm down here."

It took Mrs. Bluebird a little while to find Bobby. She did not look on the ground at first. But pretty soon she spied him out and down she flew, with a rush and a flutter.

And Bobby told her all about it, and

whimpered a little, and Mrs. Bluebird said, "Dear, dear, my poor baby son, my poor brave Bobsie"; and hopped round and round his house to see how she could get him out of it.

But there was no way.

"I'm hungry, Mummie," said Bobby.

"Of course you're hungry. I brought such a good dinner too," said Mother Bluebird. "Come right here, as close as you can get."

Bobby hopped up to the strange narrow open strips of his house, and Mother Bluebird flew away for her market basket. When she came back she had Bobby's dinner in her mouth. Bobby's mouth opened, and mother Bluebird put her beak in at the little open strip and fed Bobby. He had a fine dinner, just as good as at home.

Mother Bluebird talked comfortingly to him. She promised to bring him breakfasts and dinners, and to take care of him till

somebody should open the door. And she said, "At least, the CAT can't get at you, so you are safe from him. Take courage, and be sure to practise the wing exercises I gave you, like this."

Bobby promised. He felt very small and alone when Mother had gone back to home, to take care of brothers and sisters. The ground world seemed very big. He wondered if it was quite certain the CAT wouldn't get into his house.

By and by Gray-Squirrel came running down the road, and hopped close to him.

"Well, well," he said, "In the wrong box, aren't you? Look out for Cats and Dogs! Dogs are the worst, nasty Brutes. Watch out!"

Bobby watched out. He practised his wing exercises too. But he wasn't very happy. He wished Mother were there.

Suddenly there was a soft step on the grass. The feathers stood stiff on Bobby's back. He looked — he looked right into

two great yellow staring eyes. And his heart said just one name, "the CAT." He saw nothing but the eyes, for he couldn't take his own eyes from them, so yellow, so round, so staring, with little slits of dark in the midst that grew wide and narrow, wide and narrow.

The breath stopped in Bobby's plump little fluffy breast and he trembled, trembled. And the great cat crouched close to the little open house, moving his tail with a strange quiver and staring hungrily. Then he put out one paw and felt the house wall. Bobby trembled more terribly.

Suddenly the cat sprang! His great heavy body landed on the little house, to crush it. Ah!

But the little house did not crush! It did not even creak. Stout and strong it stood, just as it stood before.

After the first awful moment Bobby drew breath again. Oh, maybe mother was right! Maybe the dreadful cat couldn't get at him,

no matter how he tried. He waited, waited.

And that was it. Cat couldn't get at him. He squirmed his tail and glared and crouched, but Bobby was inside and he was outside. There was to be no baby bird for Cat's dinner to-day.

So at last he stalked away, trying to act as if he hadn't wanted Bobby, anyway.

Oh, but Bobby was glad! It was pretty long before his breathing place felt exactly right. But by and by it did. And by and by sleepy time came. Up in the home tree Mother Bluebird sang her lullaby. Very faintly Bobby heard it. Very faintly but bravely he chirped back, "Good night," and cuddled down in the fluffy bed the human folks had made for him. It wasn't like the down puff of home, but it was a comfort. And pretty soon he was asleep.

Three long nights and two long days Bobby Bluebird lived in the little canary house. Every day Mother Bluebird brought him his breakfasts and dinners

and suppers, and comforted him, and told him to practice his wing exercises. And every day he practiced.

But he was very lonely, and very wanting to be up in the home branches. And more and more he thought of the great air roads out into the blue. Oh, to fly! To fly, and be free!

The third morning came. The soft twittering good mornings began far up in the tree houses, the long slanting sun rays ran over the grass, the feel of the morning air came. And as Bobby Bluebird opened his eyes he saw the mother human standing by his house. She stooped and opened the little door, and reached in. Once more he was lifted in a gentle hand, his feathers brushed against a soft cheek, and soft words murmured in his ear. Then he was set gently on the grass, and he heard the folks-voice say,

“Fly, little Bluebird, fly.”

Out in the dewy grass he hopped a little

and stretched his feathered wings. How good he felt, how strong! Suddenly he lifted his wings and tried to fly — and up he went, with a rush, into the air!

Up, up with a heart of joy and a song of thankfulness, flew the little Bluebird. Up to home and mother, up to the great, soft, kindly branches, and the open roads of the air.



BEN FLICKER'S MISTAKE

DID you ever see any of the Flicker children at work? Any fine day in April, if you go where there are some big, old trees, you can hear one of them running his little steam drill. He carries it in his head, and it is kept busy all the time because all the Flicker family earn their living by drilling.

Ben Flicker lives in Brookline, just outside of the city. He flies over a row of apartment buildings twenty times a day, but he doesn't care for them. He lives and works in a very nice, green place as quiet as the country woods. It is the top of a hill,

and there are only two or three houses there, — very grand houses, as big as a City Hall. And around those houses are acres and acres of private park. The trees are very big, very old, and most of them have some bad branches or stubs.

These branches are marked with hundreds of little holes and lines, the railroads of the Grubs who are mining and dining on the wood inside. Ben Flicker's family like that. Their daily job is to drill holes straight into the wood wherever they see a Grub railroad. And when they get their sharp beaks in where Mr. Grub is dining, — well, the Flicker does the dining, and Mr. Grub provides the dinner!

One day this Spring, Ben Flicker had poor luck. He had tried his "tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-tut" on three different tree-limbs that looked good, only to be disappointed every time.

To make it worse, his sister, Frill, had made quite a meal in the same time. She

had a kind, well-meant way of calling to him to come where she was, that always irritated Ben. He felt that he knew a Grub mine when he saw it, quite as well as any girl, and he wished she wouldn't try to tell him what to do! In fact, he usually wouldn't do what she said, even if he had intended to before she said it. Some brothers are like that.

So he was very cross, indeed, this morning. Frill called to him again.

"Oh, keep still," he muttered, and flew off without caring where.

Pretty soon he found himself on the far side of the hill, where houses began. There were still trees and grass, but the Flickers usually stayed up where food was more plentiful. Ben flew along, grumbling to himself. He was over a large, brown house, with pointed gable ends in its roof. The builder had finished off the pointed tops of the gables with copper covers, like two big caps. These were painted a dull, light

green, and were very useful in preventing leaks where the roof was so pointed.

Ben glanced down. He saw something brown, and sticking up from it a stub of pale green. It was the nice, pale green color of well decayed wood, full of Grubs.

If Ben had been thinking he would have noticed that the stub was in a queer kind of tree. But Ben was thinking only of his grudge. Without a second glance, and thinking, "Now I'll beat her at it! Here's a feast!" he darted down on the green stub, poised himself on his toes, raised his powerful little steam drill of a head, and struck!

"*Tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-tut!*" It rang and reverberated like a kettle-drum. Never a Flicker made such a noise before, I guess. Probably no Flicker before had ever tried to drill on copper!

Ben almost fell off the smooth stub. What was this? What sort of noise was he making? And how frightfully hard the

limb was! Impatiently, crossly, he raised his head and struck harder.

RUBADUBDUBDUBDUBDUBDUBDUB. You would have supposed it was Fourth of July.

And Ben's beak felt as if he had put it out of joint. His claws slipped on the smooth surface, and he almost toppled over. As he saved himself, he saw the ridgepole and the roof just below —

He was drilling for Grubs on a copper roof!

Ben gave one swift glance around, and silently, swiftly, he flew away from there. Oh, *how* he hoped Frill hadn't seen him! How he hoped no one had seen him!

As he flew, he heard his sister calling eagerly from a long way off. She had found a good place and wanted him to come.

Ben was so thankful no one had seen him that he answered back, *quite* pleasantly. And in a second he had flown off to join Frill.

But out in the road a little boy and his mother were laughing with all their might, for though Frill had not seen Ben beating his copper kettle-drum, they had!



THE ENGINE THAT WOULDN'T STOP

ONCE there was a big steam Engine, very grand and proud. He was so big that when the other passenger trains stood near his train their engines looked like baby elephants beside a father elephant.

One day the big Engine stood on the track at Worcester, waiting for the clock's hand to point to ten. He puffed and snorted, and his body trembled with eagerness to start.

"Puff, puff," he said, in a slow, heavy voice, and then very fast, "Puff, puff-pfuff-uffuffuff." He looked straight down the track with his round glassy eye.

“Soon I’ll be rolling away,” he muttered, “with the smooth rails under my wheels, wind in my face, plenty of steam in my boilers. The little black man sees to that! Throttle open — ha, Billy sees to that! Good servants, Billy and the little black man, good servants! Puff, puff-pfuffuffuff!”

“Brr-ding, ding,” — sounded the big train bell, with a clatter and whirr.

Engine pressed down heavy on all his wheels and quivered from head to tail. His round eyes stared straight ahead; but all his feelings were listening for the feel of Billy’s hand, sending the start message.

He felt it. “Puff!” he snorted, “Puff, puff-pfuffuffuffuff,” and Engine slid slowly, majestically out on his smooth track.

Faster, a little faster, always a little faster. His great lungs breathed with a steady chug; his mighty piston rod thrust and thrust. The wheels clung and whirled, faster and faster. Oh, it was glorious! It was glorious to be big and strong and swift;

to know the track clear ahead and plenty of steam in the boilers; to run and run and run, snorting a long shrill whistle at every corner, blowing clouds of smoke at the clouds that raced with him! — Glorious, glorious!

Trees flew by, hills and fields and rivers flashed past, a house, more houses, a town — then fields again. Faster, faster, — rolling a little with the speed, on roared Engine, with his passenger train behind him.

A big lake gleamed up at him. He ran along beside it, making booming echoes against its shores. But Billy was sending him a message now.

“Steady, old chap, ease up a bit, we have to make the stop at Framingham. Ea-s-y!”

Engine eased up; a little slower, a little slower still, and then he was running smoothly into the station, and Billy was sending the stop message to his brakes.

Engine listened with his feelings, and when the brakes said “Stop,” he clutched

the rails with his wheels and stopped, in his own grand way. Then he puffed and coughed, not because he was tired; he wasn't even warmed up yet. But he felt so good he had to do something.

People ran along beside him and climbed into his train. Children stared at the glowing coals that dropped from his fire-pan and said, "Look, ma, the engine's afire."

Engine puffed chuckles. "Folks are so small and stupid," he thought. "But there have to be folks, of course, to take care of engines — oil them, feed them coals, and all that."

Now Billy was sending the start message. Good!

Engine felt all warm and speed-ready, every steel muscle oiled. He started smoothly, softly, as if he had no load behind him. No groaning and wheezing for him! He never jerked and stopped and banged, like the clumsy freight engines.

He was the Champion Express Engine. Easily, smoothly, not hurrying, he started, listening with his feelings to Billy's messages — clever Billy who was the best engineer on the road.

"Billy is a good servant," thought Engine to himself. "He knows what I like, he looks after me. He is saying now, 'Let her out, boy, let her out; get a move on.'"

And Engine did 'let her out.' Faster, faster, faster he rolled, swaying from side to side, leaning a bit on the curves, faster, faster, flying along!

Houses and more houses snapped past. "Toot, toot," Engine's whistle blew. Far behind him streamed his smoky breath. A steady roar came from his wheels.

How happy Engine was! The heat glowed in his body, his heart beat in a whirl. He was excited.

"Steady now, steady," came the message from Billy. "We're coming into the city — a bit easier, old chap!"

But Engine was beside himself with power and excitement.

"Mind your business," he puffed. "I'm master, you're servant. Speed, speed!" and he rushed on.

"Steady, *steady*," came the message, a hard strong message this time. "Keep your head, Engine!"

"Hah-hah, look out for your own head," snorted Engine. "I'm running this trip!"

"Obey!" came the message back. "I'm master. *Obey!*"

Engine felt a pulling, a dragging in all his steel fibres. In spite of himself he did obey. He did steady down. He ran more slowly.

But, oh, how angry Engine was! Quivers of rage quivered over him. He puffed black smoke and snorted great snorts. Billy thought he was master, did he? Billy thought he could run Engine, did he? Billy didn't know he was just a good servant. Huh! Huh! Huhuhuhuff!

Now they were gliding through the first

of the city. Many tracks spread out around Engine's track. Many dull brick buildings stared at him with dirty glass eyes.

Now they were coming into the great train-yards. Soon they would be in the South Station. Billy was sending the "Ease up" message. Soon he would send the "Stop" message to Engine's brakes.

And suddenly Engine decided he would not stop! He would play a good trick on silly Billy, who thought he was master. He just wouldn't stop.

Now they were sliding along into the South Station. "Slow — slow — ease to a stop," came the message.

Engine ran on.

"Stop!" came Billy's order, sharp and short.

*Creak—Grind—*Engine's brakes obeyed; they clutched and held, and hurt frightfully. But Engine had the bit in his teeth. His round glass eye glared at the short stretch of track ahead, at the Bumper stick-

ing its nose up at him. He saw the tall fence behind the Bumper and the crowds of people pushing through the gates.

And Engine pushed against his brakes naughtily, furiously. "I'm going past that silly old Bumper for once. I'm going through that silly old fence," he puffed. "I'll show them who's master here!"

Grind — grind, *snap*! Something broke. It hurt, but Engine couldn't stop now if he tried; the brakes were loose.

And with a squeak and a roar, and a crash, Engine ran straight into good old Bumper.

Now Bumper was used to accidents. That was his job. If a brake couldn't quite hold, or a new young engineer didn't send the stop message soon enough, it was Bumper's job to stop the Engine as it slid along. He usually did it quietly, with a little scolding thump.

But nothing like this had ever happened to Bumper. No little scolding thump was

going to stop this runaway Engine. So Bumper did the only thing he could do, to stop Engine. He put his nose right under Engine's fore wheels and gave him a mighty twist up in the air, like a puppy tossing a ball.

And the next thing Engine knew, he was reared up on his hind wheels, with his head stuck over the top of the fence, his passenger train bunting into his tail.

And all the little human folks were screaming and running, and coal was crashing and falling out of his cab, and hot cinders were shaking around, and steam was roaring out of a broken pipe in his works.

Gracious! He tried to get down from there, but he couldn't budge, for the passenger coaches were pushed right up behind him and Old Bumper had his nose like a wedge under him.

Engine tried to snort but no smoky breath came. He tried to slide back, but Bumper held him fast. He tried to go on

over the fence but he was helpless with his fore wheels in the air.

So there he sat, rearing up like a puppy begging for a bone, his round glass eye staring wildly at the station roof and his heart full of dismay.

There he sat, helpless, frightened, — yes, and *silly*, while trainmen ran up and stood around him, folks crowded up in swarms to see, and all the place was full of clash and clatter.

Where was the little black man, and where, oh, where was Billy? Engine was all alone in the midst of the clamor, alone and helpless.

Hour after hour he perched up there in his foolish position, staring at the ceiling, and listening to the voices. Once a child's sharp little voice squeaked out: "Oh, Mamma, look at the funny engine trying to peek over the fence."

How ashamed Engine was — he, the proud, great, swift Express Engine, to be

laughed at! To be funny in the eyes of folks!

Darkness came on — Engine shivered. He loved the gleam of his own starry eye shining far down the silver ribbon of the track; he loved the gay lights of the station as he slid into his place on his evening trip. But now he stared up into the gloomy vault of the ceiling and saw nothing.

Poor naughty, lonely Engine!

At last something happened. He felt things happening behind him and under him. A wrecking crew was at work.

After a while he knew that he was being slid downward and backward. And then — oh, happy Engine — he felt the rails under his wheels again. His eye no longer stared at the ceiling, but out at the friendly lights. He was on his dear old track once more and standing on all his wheels, like a self-respecting Engine.

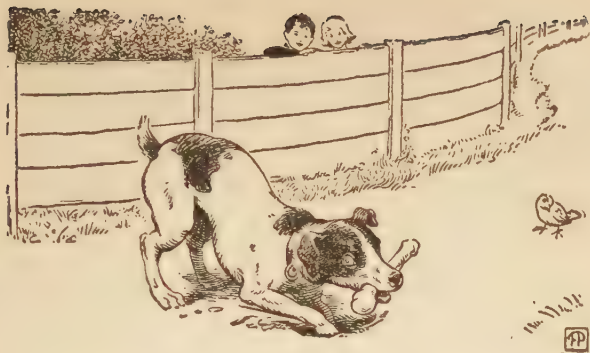
And then he heard Billy's voice — dear, kind, wise Billy's voice. "Get some steam

up," it said, "and we will run him into the Repair Shop and get his brakes fixed; there isn't much harm done."

Engine breathed a slow deep sigh of thankfulness and repentance. Then he began to puff little fast puffs of eager talk. "I'm sorry, Billy, sorry, Billy, sorry, Billy. I'll never disobey you any more. I've learned that Engines are no good without tracks to run on and Engineers to tell them what to do. You're master, Billy, I'm just Engine. And I'll be a good obedient Engine all my days to you."

"All right, old chap," came Billy's message. "Easy does it; take it slowly now."

And off they went out into the yards, Engine, Billy and the Little Black Man, with a "Puff — puff — pfuffuffuffuf."



BUDDY AND THE BURIED BONE

BUDDY trotted up the street with a big bone in his mouth. Sam, the meat-market man, had given it to him, and Buddy wanted it very much, for it was a delicious bone. But just now, he could not enjoy it; it was too near breakfast-time.

So Buddy meant to bury the bone, for safe-keeping, until his appetite should be keener.

He had the very spot picked out, a most perfect spot for burying a bone. On his way to market he had seen it. Right in the middle of the asphalt avenue, in the long slope of Commonwealth Hill, was a hole ready

dug. The ground had been well softened, dug and hollowed out. All a dog would have to do was to scratch the loose gravel over his meal, and leave it in storage!

Buddy had stopped on his way downhill and watched the men who were making the hole. They were men in blue overalls and caps. Buddy had noticed what they were doing, and approved of it. It was certain that there ought to be more soft places in frosty weather, more easily scratched and dug places, where a dog need not bruise his paws or his nose.

Men were useful animals, Buddy thought to himself. At home, now, the Man of the House was always ready to take him motor-ing at the right time in the afternoon, just about sundown, when a dog had run around as long as he cared to. The Man had the car at the door as regularly as could be. And to make things perfectly comfortable, the Woman of the House, Buddy's Lady, always came along, bringing her deliciously

warm, fur-coated lap for him to snuggle in. Laps, of course, were the *real* thing. So much better than cushions!

And there was Sam. Almost every morning Sam had a choice bone for Buddy. "Hello, Bud! Come right in. How's the world?" Sam would say, shaking his fat sides as Buddy came in close behind some child or lady who was shopping. Then followed pettings, that Buddy rather thought overdone. But *then* followed bones. So, all in all, Sam was a nice and useful creature.

And now men were busily tearing up holes in the asphalt pavement, and digging the ground around them till it was soft and proper to use. Really, Buddy thought contentedly, men made a dog's world quite all right.

Buddy trotted on, up the hill. The workmen were gone, but he could see them far down the street, doubtless digging more of the sensible holes, improving the world for little dogs.

All the soft places by the side of the road he passed, with only a glint of one eye sidewise. He remembered the one choice spot in the middle, — bigger, softer than the rest, more inviting for a cupboard.

Ah, here it was. Buddy looked around for troublesome motors. There were none, for a wonder. So with his best business manner he went to work. The soft earth flew for a few seconds, and then Buddy laid the delicious bone tenderly in its nest, straightened it to his liking with his nose — and presto! He covered it with a few efficient scratches. Done, buried, preserved!

Then Buddy, his mind free, trotted merrily off, to go a-calling, leaving his bone in the middle of Commonwealth Road.

About an hour later, a new gang of workmen appeared at the top of the hill, moving slowly, carrying shovels and followed by a big cart.

Behind them came the giant Steam

Roller, rumbling and rolling, puffing and blowing.

As they moved along, the first two workmen shoveled small stones and gravel from the cart into the holes which the earlier gang had made. The next two workmen shoveled in a sticky tarry mass from another cart.

Behind them all, the Steam Roller rolled majestically, heavily, over the filled holes, leaving the pavement flat and firm as a rubber doormat. Back it chugged, and forward it came again, till each short piece of road was black and smooth and firmly covered.

And after the Roller came a cart of sand, with men to shovel the sand out in great sprays, sprinkling it all over the nice new pavement. Like powdered sugar on the top crust of a pie it lay. Where were the holes? They were not anywhere.

Down the hill, slowly, the procession moved. Over each hole in turn, they made

the asphalt pie-crust and rolled it down, and sprinkled it with sand. And at last they came to Buddy's bonehole. And because it was a big one, they filled it especially hard. They made it into an extra good pie; — but nobody knew it was a *meat* pie!

On and on went the procession. On went the day. By sundown, Commonwealth Hill and Road was as good as new, a paved street without one flaw in its surface. It was all mended.

A little while before sundown, Buddy got the appetite he had been waiting for, and he started out for his buried bone. He might have got it sooner if he had not been tempted at one or two back doors — friendly, proper back doors where he was accustomed to call and be greeted by the family. He had had a snack or two. But now the appetite was coming, and there was easily time to get his bone before his motor should be ready at his own door. A

brisk trot would do no harm, either, as an appetizer.

As he made his way steadily across lots, Buddy had his mind comfortably on the bone, and on the dessert he would make in his own kitchen under the stove, after the drive. The Lady of the House would have an ample supper ready, and of it he would take what he wanted, after the bone. A fine, juicy bone it was, one of Sam's best. A good bone for the best meal of the day.

Trot, trot, steadily, a little sidewise, as happy dogs like to go, Buddy came through the Parkers' back yard, to Commonwealth Road at the foot of the Hill.

The smooth, black, sanded pavement lay before him. With a little dog's precise memory he remembered all the nice, soft, squashy places beside the pavement and in it. Where were they? Where *were* they? Right to left, Buddy trotted, smelling, looking — and as he ran, bewilderment came

upon him. *Was* this the same road? Was he where he was? Or wasn't he?

Yes, it was the road uphill, past the place the Man always turned off at; it was the road he had come down that morning. He knew it. But what had happened to the well-dug holes alongside?

Well, well, he had no time to linger and wonder. He must get his bone, and be off for a ride with the Folks. With real haste, now, Buddy galloped uphill to find his bone.

Up, up the hill; here was the telephone pole next his hiding-place. But *where was the hiding-place?* Where was the break in the pavement, all soft and gravelly, and hiding his juicy bone?

There was no break in the pavement, anywhere. Smooth and sandy it stretched before him, uphill, downhill, sidewise and the other sidewise. There was no hole.

Then Buddy lost his presence of mind. Back and forth, round and round, he ran,

nosing and smelling, darting out of the way of motors, darting back again; scratching foolishly, wildly at the asphalt pie-crust. But alas, Buddy's meat pie was crusted for keeps, and its juicy contents were likely to last longer than Buddy's own little bones.

And finally he gave it up. Totally bewildered, totally upset, he straggled home.

The Man and the fur-robed Lady had given up waiting for him. The car was gone. The kitchen door was locked. No bone, no ride, no supper. Buddy sat down on the back step and waited. His big, black eyes rolled moistly.

And there they found him, the Man and the Lady, a most disconsolate-looking little dog. "Why Buddy, what's the matter, where were you?" said the Lady's sweet voice.

Buddy leaped wildly to kiss their faces, their hands. He followed them into the house, leaping and begging. He wanted to be petted, to be consoled, to be fed. He

wanted to tell them about the lost hole and the black magic of the changed road.

But they couldn't understand. He had to give it up. Only they *did* understand that he was in trouble. "Why, dear, Buddy has been crying!" said the Lady.

"Crying? Why, the little beggar!" said the Man. "What is it, Buddy, old man? Can't you tell a feller?"

"Well, well, don't you care, Buddy; there is something nice in the kitchen," said the Lady laughing. "You come along with me. We'll fix it."

And out in the kitchen they mixed the nicest meal Buddy had had in a month. *Almost* it made up for the lost bone. Almost. And to-morrow probably Sam would give him another bone.

Buddy lay down by the fireplace in the living-room, full of dinner, tired of running, very drowsy.

The Lady sat on the big sofa, knitting. The Man sat in a big chair looking at the

paper. It was all very happy and peaceful. Buddy dozed off.

By and by the little dog stirred and twitched in his sleep; a short bark came from him.

“Buddy’s dreaming,” said the Lady.

“Dreaming of his dog’s life,” said the Man smiling.

“Dreaming of his dinner, more likely,” said the Lady.

But they never guessed that Buddy was dreaming of a meat pie that would never be opened for any little dog’s dinner — an asphalt pie with sandy crust, fastened tight down over a juicy, treasured, buried bone.



THE BEES AND THE SUGAR

ONCE upon a time a smart little Bee lived in a well-kept Bee cottage with all her dozens of sisters and brothers.

They were an intelligent family. All the girls were very capable. But of them all, Alexandra, or Lexie as they called her, was the smartest and the quickest.

She wore a fancy dress, all striped with yellow on a dark ground, and very well fitting. And she had a stylish, capable way with her. Nobody in the house could fly quite like her. So she usually led the crowd when they were off after sweets to make honey of.

Every day the Bee children had to go on a hunt for sweets, to make the family supply of honey out of. In season they usually flew straight to the clover fields. It was pretty easy to get the sweetness out of the clover; slow, of course, but still, not too hard. Each bee would fasten herself determinedly on to a purple blossom, and tug and tug till she had sweetness enough sticking to her hands and feet to fly home with. It was only a wee bit each one could carry, but many trips and many sisters made the little big, and at last there would be enough to make a nice batch of honey. Making honey was the business of the Bee family.

Aunt Rosalie was the superintendent of the children's work. Every night she looked over the supply of sweets and measured it for the morning's honey-making. And if there was too little, oh, how cross Aunt Rosalie was! She would scold and sputter, *zzzzzzzzzz*. And sometimes she would do more than scold. You'd think,

wouldn't you, that an Aunt with a name like 'Rosalie' would have been nice and pleasant? But she wasn't. She was a vixen, a real vixen. Lexie almost hated her.

You see, Lexie was so much smarter than the others that they all followed her, and waited for her to start them off at everything. So when anything went wrong, everybody naturally blamed Lexie, because she was the leader. Aunt Rosalie was always blaming her. Either there wasn't enough sweets, or it wasn't the right kind, or the Bee children had got it stuck too tightly to their hands. Always it was something.

Now, Lexie didn't know it, but really Aunt Rosalie was very much satisfied with the children's work. She was always saying to the other Aunts, "An extra pindle to-day; how's that? Pretty good for children, *I* think. That Alexandra is a good one!" (A 'pindle' is a Bee's pound, of course.)

But Aunt Rosalie was one of those queer

Bees who think it spoils children to praise them. She believed that they would get lazy if she let them guess how well they had done. So she kept on scolding. And it was queer, but Lexie did really care a lot about pleasing her, cross as she was. It was such a triumph to surprise Aunt Rosalie into a word of praise; really worth working for.

"I believe it *hurts* her, to say we've got enough," Lexie used to grumble.

"Crosspatch!" the others would echo. They adored Lexie.

But they went on trying to please Aunt Rosalie.

One morning, before clover time had come, the Bee children were out early at their work, and they were feeling very blue; blue and buzzy, and quarrelsome. Because sweets were scarce, and they had to make long flights, and the air was heavy, anyway. They were discouraged before they had really begun.

Lexie was feeling blue, too. But Lexie

always made believe she felt cheerful. She had discovered that making believe most always ended by making her really cheerful. So she said,

“Now, just wait a bit. I will go and scout around. Wait here and rest on this fence in the sun. I’ll find us a place, never fear.”

And off she flew, with her smart little air, as if she were going straight into a bucket of sweets.

And, my dears, that’s just what she did! She did fly straight to a bucket of sweets. Now, let me tell you. Down by the railroad station an express car was standing on the siding. And in that express car had been five great wooden buckets, or tubs, of granulated sugar; the kind you have in the sugar bowl. They were being taken to the grocer in the nearest town. And when the baggage men and the express men were taking off those buckets they dropped one. And it was so very, very heavy that when it struck the edge of the platform, it broke!

And the shining, white sugar poured out in a perfect fountain, and heaped itself all over the track and the platform-edge. A make-believe mountain of sugar!

That's what Lexie flew straight into. She was coming along looking sharply about, but never in the world expecting to see or smell sweets on the railroad track, only thinking of crossing it to the field beyond, when suddenly her sweets-sense prickled her into attention. And then she saw the gleaming white heap, and something told her "That's sweet."

And then she smelled it from away off, and she *knew* it was sweet. And so she flew fast as anything to it — and it *was* sweet!

It was the biggest lot of sweetness Lexie had ever seen or dreamed of. Enough to make honey for days, and days, and days.

All Lexie could think of was, "*This* would make Aunt Rosalie pleasant."

She made sure it was sweets, and good sweets. (Every Bee child has a knowing in

her mind that tells her what is good sweets for honey.) Then she flew as fast as her wings could carry her, back to the fence where the others were waiting, blue and quarrelsome.

Diggie was just saying, "I bet we'll catch it to-night," when Lexie came up. Lexie was so excited she could hardly come to a stop. But she didn't show how excited she was to the others. Oh, no, indeed! She was too smart for that. Instead, she said, in a cool, capable way,

"I've found a good place. Come along, and move lively."

They were all glad, but nobody thought it would be much of a place. It wasn't time for very good sweets-gathering. So they grumbled a little as they flew along after their sister.

But when they saw the sugar mountain — ah, then they had something to say! They were so excited that they buzzed like a saw-mill. It was, "Lexie, Lexie, how won-

derful! How perfectly wonderful! How glorious! Why, we'll get enough for *years*. Now what'll Aunt Rosalie say!"

Lexie let them talk a while. She knew they couldn't work if she didn't, they were so excited. But pretty soon she set them at work.

"Lively, now, all at it!" she said. "Take up all you can, and carry it home and get back here again."

And you should just have seen them go at it! "Busy as Bees," you often hear said, but you can't guess how busy Bees are till you see them at something they are really interested in. The Bee children just threw themselves into that heap, to carry it off. It looked like a beehive for a while.

But after a few minutes Lexie began to be anxious. Something was wrong. Nobody seemed to be able to get a good load. One or two started away home, but most of the children kept burrowing and tugging, trying to get more before they started. Lexie

herself was still trying to get more. But the sweets was so dry that it just slid off. She could not load up. The Bee children, you know, make regular baskets of their arms and legs, piling them with as much of the sticky sweetness of the flowers as will cling to them. But this sweetness wasn't sticky, and it did not cling at all. It slid smoothly off.

Here was trouble. The Bee children began to buzz and hum anxiously, crossly. To have a mountain of sweets before their eyes, and not to be able to carry it home; this was too much!

While they were buzzing Lexie was thinking. Lexie always began to think when the others began to buzz. She thought, carefully: "We can't carry this sweetness home because it slides off us. Why does it slide off? It has no stickiness to it. How can I make it sticky? It is too dry. How can I make it wet?" This was a puzzle.

Then she began to think again. "This

sweetness slides off my legs and arms; if it were wet it might stick; or if my arms and legs were wet they might stick to it — Eureka! I have it!”

And without a word or a buzz Lexie flew away.

The others were so busy fussing that they didn't see her go.

Lexie flew straight to the water tank that stood towering above the track farther up. A constant leak from its hanging rubber hose dripped down into a little puddle below. Lexie made for the puddle, drenched herself in it, all but her wings, and flew back again. Into the sugar pile she waded — and came out, a sugar-coated Bee! She was loaded with all the sweetness she could possibly carry. Almost more than she could carry.

“Come on!” she called. “Wet yourselves in the pool. Only be careful not to wet your wings. Then roll yourselves in the sweetness. And follow me home.”

“Follow Lexie home!” buzzed the other Bees. “Roll yourself in sweetness and follow Lexie home!” “Follow Lexie home!”

What happened then was like a Mother Goose story. Dozens and dozens of candy-coated Bees were coming out of the sugar pile and flying away in a cloud. The air was full of Bees and sugar.

But most of it stuck. And the Bee children got back to the cottage with it, following Lexie.

Aunt Rosalie happened to be at the door, and saw them coming. Far away she could see that they were loaded, by the way they flew. And as they came nearer the sun caught on their crystal-coated bodies and made them into a dazzling stream of glittering things.

Aunt Rosalie set up a shrill buzz. By the time Lexie alighted heavily at the door, Aunt Rosalie was fairly a-quiver, her old maid’s cap trembling, her sharp eyes goggling.

“What-ever, what-ever, what-ever have you got?” she said.

“I don’t know,” said Lexie, calmly. “But it is good sweets, and there’s lots more of it.”

Aunt Rosalie smelled and touched, and then she fairly squeaked, “It’s sugar, humans’ sugar! And all of you loaded! What fortune, what good fortune!”

At last, Aunt Rosalie was pleased.

So the Bee children came and went, went and came, wetting their bodies each time in the pool, and rolling themselves in sugar, till finally they had the whole great pile carried away.

In the morning of the next day, when the express man came to work, he looked where the sugar pile had been. And it wasn’t there! And to this day he would have been wondering what became of it, if the station master hadn’t told him.

The station master had seen Lexie and her sisters at work. He had watched them

from his window, for hours. He said he had never seen anything more interesting. And he told the Express man. And the Express man told some one else.

And now I am telling you: how Lexie and her sisters made themselves into candy-coated Bees, and carried home the sugar to make honey with.



THE FLYAWAY HAT

ONCE there were two small girls who wanted new hats. They both wanted broad, white straw hats with a wreath of flowers around the crown.

One of the little girls was named Betty Long. She lived with her mother and father in a big, white house near a large city.

The other small girl was named Betsy Short. She lived with her grandmother and her aunt in a wee, brown house at the side of the road, "way down in Maine." No city was near, and the next town was ten miles away.

All summer the road hummed with the fast motors of the city people, hurrying to their vacations by the sea and in the mountains. In winter the road was like a frosty ribbon a mile long, tying the little brown house to school and church.

One warm June day, Betty Long said to her mother, "Mother dearest, I wish I had a big, white hat with lots of flowers on it." Her mother smiled and said, "We will get one to-morrow in Boston."

And they did get one next day in Boston. It was a charming hat. A wreath of French flowers lay on its broad brim, pink, yellow, blue and lavender. And the brim drooped prettily over Betty's rosy face and smooth brown hair.

That very day, Betsy Short said to her aunt, "I wish I had a new hat, Auntie; I wish I had a *white* hat with flowers on it." Aunt Ellen smiled a kind, tired smile, and said, "I wish you had, Betsy, but you know Grandma's medicine took every cent I got

from the eggs. And there's no washing to do till the summer folks come at 'The Corners.' I guess you'll have to do with the old one this year."

So Betsy went upstairs and took out the three-year-old blue straw, and dusted it, and turned the faded ribbon one more time. And she put it on her fair, curly head, where it perched stiffly.

Then she cried a little, for it was an ugly hat, and Betsy loved pretty things. But then she wiped her eyes and went downstairs, smiling, for Auntie had enough to bear without seeing a disappointed face.

On Saturday, two weeks later, Mr. and Mrs. Long and Betty were on their way to their summer home. Betty sat alone on the back seat of the touring car, and mother sat with father, who drove. The cool, refreshing wind blew against Betty's cheek, and flapped the broad white hat-brim in her eyes.

Betty wished she had taken Mother's

advice and worn the small traveling hat. Mother had not said "do," but she had said, "I would." Betty knew that she herself should have said, "Then I will, Mother." So now she did not want Mother to see that the wide brim made her uncomfortable.

After a while she took off her hat, and held it on her lap. Then she laid it down on the seat beside her. The wind blew, the car hummed smoothly along, Betty was happy.

The pretty white hat lay quietly on the seat like a gay bird on a bough. Sometimes it fluttered in the wind, and raised its brim like a wing. After a while the wind blew more strongly. It was so cool and fragrant that it made Betty drowsy. She took a nap, curled against the deep cushions.

A gust of wind puffed itself under the white hat. The brim flapped again, more like a wing. That made the gust of wind gay, and it came back, with two of its brothers. They ran under the flapping brim,

lifted the hat high in the air — and carried it soaring out of the car, and away!

Nobody saw, nobody heard. Betty slept on.

Soaring like a bird, the lovely hat flew over the dusty road, across some grass, and past a wee, brown house. Just over the lilac bush, behind the wee, brown house, the teasing winds dropped it, and ran away after something else.

The white hat fell into the branches, and was held there, a posy of pink, blue, yellow and lavender.

At one o'clock, Mother's merry voice waked Betty. "Wake up, dear," she said. "We're going to have dinner before we go on the ferry. Put on your hat to go into the hotel."

Betty opened her eyes and sat up.

"All right," she said sleepily. Then she sat up straighter and looked at the seat beside her. Her eyes opened wider, and she

sat up very straight indeed, and began to move the bags at her feet.

"Where's my hat?" she said. "Did you take it, Mummy?"

"Why, no, dear," said her mother. "Isn't it right there? Where did you have it?"

"I laid it on the seat," said Betty. "I think I have been asleep. It must have fallen under the rugs."

"Dear me," said Mrs. Long. "It will be crushed. Make haste and rescue it, Betty!"

Betty made haste. She took up all the rugs, and lifted all the coats. Then Father Long came back with her and lifted every single thing out of its place and back again.

But alas! No pretty white hat with a wreath of flowers was there. No pretty white hat was in the car, anywhere. It was lost.

"The wind was rather strong," said

Father, thoughtfully. "I'm afraid your hat blew out on the road across the marshes, Betty."

"Shall we go back?" said Mother.

Father shook his head. "No use, dear," he said. "It may be thirty miles back, or a mile out to sea. We will leave a notice and a reward in the post-office here, in case some car behind us picked it up."

Betty's face was very pink, and her lips shut very tight together. She took her handkerchief from her pocket and wiped the tears from her eyes.

"It is all my fault, Mother," she said in a shaky voice. "If I had worn the traveling hat, as you wanted me to, it would not have happened."

"I'm sorry, dear," said Mrs. Long. "So sorry!"

"It was *such* a pretty hat!" said Betty, still more shakily. "But I'm sorriest that I was so careless."

Father Long and Mother Long said noth-

ing. Each of them knew that the other wanted to say, "You shall have another."

But both of them knew that Betty must learn to be careful, and to pay attention to Mother's suggestions. So both of them very sorrily said nothing.

And pretty soon Betty wiped away her tears and smiled at them. "I'll wear the little hat all summer for punishment," she said. "Anyway, it is pretty enough."

Father squeezed her hand. Mother wiped her own eyes, and said, "Maybe we shall get it back."

But Betty shook her head. She felt that the white hat was gone forever. Only once as they sat at dinner did she speak of it again. Then she said, "Mummy, darling, do you know what I wish?"

"No, what?" said Mother.

"I wish some poor little girl that never had a lovely hat could find mine, and enjoy it."

"I wish so, too," said Mrs. Long.

And then they talked of other things. For there was always so much to enjoy on the trip to Maine that no one could sorrow long about a lost hat.

At about the time Betty Long was eating her dinner in the hotel, Betsy Short's Aunt said to her, "Get a pail of water, Betsy; dinner's ready."

Betsy ran out of the kitchen into the yard. The old well beside the lilac tree was always full of cold clear water, and the pail with its long rope stood ready at the side.

Aunt Ellen went on putting dinner on the table at the kitchen window.

Suddenly the door burst open and Betsy's voice startled Aunt Ellen. It was a choky voice, excited and spluttery.

"Auntie, oh, Auntie, l-l-look!" Betsy cried. In her hands she was holding up — not a pail of water, but a big, white, straw hat with a wreath of flowers on it!

"Auntie, it was on the lilac bush," she said. "On the lilac bush — like a bouquet!

I thought it was flowers. Oh, Auntie, look; did you ever see anything so grand?"

Aunt Ellen took the hat carefully. "For the land's sake!" she said. "It is handsome. How do you suppose it came on the lilac bush?"

"Oh, I don't know. I don't know. Isn't it lovely? Perhaps the fairies put it there. Look at the flowers, Auntie, and the ribbon."

"Run out and look, child," said the Aunt. "There must be folks here. Some one must have just taken it off."

"There aren't any folks," said Betsy. "I looked all round. I ran round the house and behind the clump of bushes. There isn't *anybody*."

Aunt Ellen stepped to the door and looked up and down the yard; up and down the street. Cars went whizzing by every few minutes. Nobody in them so much as looked at the little brown house.

"Betsy, child," said Aunt Ellen suddenly,



ON THE LILAC BUSH — LIKE A BOUQUET!

"I'm thinking that hat flew off some child's lap in an automobile. The way they go by here, a million miles a minute, it's a wonder everything doesn't fly out."

"Oh, but Auntie, it couldn't have flown right into my lilac tree," said Betsy. "It couldn't have. Auntie, did you *ever* see anything so pretty as it is?"

"I never saw a nicer hat for a little girl," said Aunt Ellen soberly. She was thinking how nice *her* little girl would look in such a hat. "Seems just made for a little girl's face."

Betsy lifted the hat suddenly, and set it on her own curly head. "Does it look nice on me?" she said, eagerly.

Aunt Ellen looked at the rosy little face under the big flowery brim, and swallowed hard. "Yes, it does," she said. "But it isn't yours, Betsy. And the more we look at it the harder it'll be, when the owner comes for it. You take it off, child, and sit right out by the road, an' hold it. The folks

that lost it won't be long getting back to look for it. They'll be real thankful to see it again."

Betsy's lips quivered, and she hung her head. But she went slowly out of the house and sat down by the road, holding the lovely hat in her lap, for all to see.

She sat there for half an hour, looking down at the beautiful flowers and listening for the car, *the* car, to stop. She listened for a voice to say, "Why, *there's* my hat; that little girl's got it."

But no car stopped. And Aunt Ellen came out and sent her in to eat her dinner. "I'll sit here and hold the hat," said Aunt Ellen.

All that long afternoon, a curly-haired little girl in a brown gingham dress sat by the roadside, holding a beautiful flowery hat in her lap. Once in a while some motorist looked at her. Then she looked up, in a frightened way. But no one stopped, no one said, "*There's* my hat."

In the evening, Aunt Ellen said, "My, how foolish we are. That hat's got the name of some big store in it, most likely. We can write there and ask who bought it."

But they found no name inside. Aunt Ellen could not know that Mrs. Long's milliner had put an extra lining in the hat, at the last minute, so it would fit Betty's smooth head better. Carefully hidden under the second lining there *was* a name. But if she had seen it, Aunt Ellen would not have known where to write, for the name was "Clotilde." And what did Aunt Ellen know about "Clotilde?" Just nothing at all.

So at last, after days of expecting some one to stop, and after putting a card in the post-office in big letters, "Found, a hat," even Aunt Ellen saw that nobody was coming to claim the lovely hat with its wreath of flowers.

"I don't see any way to find out who owned it," she said, one day. "And I'm

going to say you can keep it, Betsy. Seems almost as if it was sent you."

"Oh, Auntie!" Betsy said. That was all. But if there *had* been fairies in the lilac bush, and if they *had* looked in at Betsy's window that afternoon, they would have seen the happiest little girl in all the State of Maine holding in her hands a big, white hat with a wreath of flowers on it. And they would have heard her say softly, "Thanks, *thanks*, dear little other girl, wherever you are. And I do hope you're a rich child and don't need this lovely hat."

Then maybe the fairies would have flown to Betty Long's summer home and peeked in at her window. And they would have seen another perfectly happy little girl, pulling on a white middy hat, to go sailing. And they would have heard her say,

"Mummy, dear, I haven't missed my lovely hat a bit; I don't need it here. Don't you *hope* some nice poor child got it?"

So, you see, *that* was all right.



THE SCARLET TANAGER

ONCE there was a Scarlet Tanager. He was a beautiful bird. He had a scarlet waistcoat and cap.

The Scarlet Tanager sang a cheery song, like the merry whistle of a friendly boy.

The Scarlet Tanager flew and sang, and lived a happy life.

One day a terrible storm came out of the sky. Hailstones beat on the windows of houses. They beat on all the little animals that were out of doors.

With the hail came a terrible wind. It blew so hard that it blew all before it.

The beautiful Scarlet Tanager was flying

home to his nest. The hard, icy hailstones hurt him. He was very cold. The hail blinded his eyes so that he could hardly see.

But he flew bravely on.

Then, all at once, came the terrible icy wind. It lifted the Scarlet Tanager and blew him before it.

In a moment the icy wind dashed the beautiful bird against a high telephone wire. His head was hurt. He fell to the ground.

There he lay, on the hard ground, and the hailstones beat upon him. His breath came in gasps. His heart beat faintly.... The little Scarlet Tanager was almost dead.

At that moment a man came along the path. His head was bent down, to keep the hail from his eyes. He saw the little bird, at his feet.

"Poor little storm-driven bird," the man said. He stooped, and took the Scarlet Tanager gently in his hand. He saw a bright drop of blood on his beak. The

blood was as red as the scarlet waistcoat and cap.

“It is a Scarlet Tanager,” the man said. “At least he shall not die here in the cold.”

Very gently he carried the little bird home to his house. He made a cotton nest in a basket, and laid the Scarlet Tanager in it. He fed the little bird from a spoon. He bathed the little beak with a soft bit of cotton.

Day after day he took care of the Scarlet Tanager.

At first he thought the little bird must die. But no, the Scarlet Tanager did not die. By and by he flew all about the big beautiful house. But he was not strong.

At last he was well and strong. Then the man took the beautiful bird in his hand, and went to the door. He opened the door and stood on the veranda.

He opened his hand.

“Fly away, little Friend,” he said. “You are free!”

The Scarlet Tanager shot up into the air. Higher and higher he flew, and round all the tree-tops, as if he were wild with joy. Then all at once he came back quite close to the house and perched on a tree-top.

There he began to sing. He sang the Scarlet Tanager's merry song. The little scarlet throat trembled with the strength of the sound. It was a song of joy and thanks.

The gentleman looked up at the bird and listened with all his heart. He knew the Scarlet Tanager was saying, "Thank you."

When the song was over, the gentleman turned away to go into the house.

"Good-bye, beautiful singer," he said. "I cannot follow your road. Good-bye."

As he opened the door, he heard the sound of wings above his head. Then he felt a light touch on his hair. There was the Scarlet Tanager, hovering over his head!

The gentleman went into the house. The Scarlet Tanager flew in with him. He

perched on a chair and made little friendly noises.

“Well, well!” said the gentleman. “Do you mean that you don’t want to go away?”

The Scarlet Tanager fluttered his wings, and moved his head prettily.

“Well, well, indeed,” said the gentleman. “You want to stay! Then we shall not say good-bye. I am glad, indeed, to have you. We shall just add a Scarlet Tanager to our family.”

So the Scarlet Tanager stayed with his good friend. He made himself a home in one of the tall trees near the house.

All day long he flew in freedom on the roads of the air. But often in the early morning the gentleman would hear a tapping on the window. He would open the window, and his little bird friend would come in. And very often at twilight the same thing would happen.

Always there was water and a sugar lump

for the Scarlet Tanager, in the place where he used to find it.

Always there was a welcome for him.

So they lived a happy life, the bird and the man. The Scarlet Tanager sang his cheery song at morning and at evening time. And his kind friend listened to the songs and was glad that his hand had saved the little singer from death.



THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

THERE was once a little boy who sang in a choir. He had a beautiful soprano voice, and he loved music. His mother and father loved music, too.

One Christmas they gave little Robert a fine phonograph and a big box of records. He had never before had so wonderful a Christmas gift, and he was about the happiest boy in the great city of New York.

Robert played the records over and over. Most of all he played the records of the old Christmas hymns and carols. He knew these well, and sometimes he sang them with the phonograph.

Robert never tired of his Christmas gift. Spring and summer passed and winter came again. Another Christmas was near, but Robert still liked his phonograph better than all his other treasures. He was nine years old this year, and his high clear voice was the sweetest in the choir.

That year, far away in the South lived another boy who loved music. He had sung in a church choir, too, but now he did not sing any more, for he was ill. Thin and pale he was, and his eyes looked out of dark hollows. His cheeks were red with fever, but his hands were cold and weak. He was ill with a sickness that the doctors could not cure. His name was Larry.

When Larry felt strong he walked a little way. Sometimes he went to church to hear the hymns sung. But most often he could not go. And then, as he sat in his bare room, he longed to hear the sweet music, and to forget the loneliness and pain.

One day in the church he heard a new

preacher. This preacher was a business man who was traveling about the country, telling men and women everywhere about the love of God which had saved him from a life of misery and pain. He was trying to help others to find that love, so that their lives could be changed as his life had been changed, to happiness.

When he spoke that day, he told of rich men and poor men whom he had met. He said that many of them had found new courage and joy by giving their hearts to God's love.

The sick boy listened and a great hope grew in his mind. After the service he waited for the preacher. And eagerly he said to him,

"Mr. Morrow, do you know many rich men and women?"

"Yes, my boy," said the preacher, looking into the thin face.

"And some of them have kind hearts?"

"Yes, my boy," said the preacher.

“Oh, then,” said the boy, “will you not ask them something for me? I am dying, Mr. Morrow, and I am poor. I am not afraid; God is my refuge. But, oh, I am so lonely! There is nothing in my room, nothing. If I could only have music there! — only have the beautiful, comforting hymns of the church to listen to! Mr. Morrow, will you not ask some one of those rich men of our church to lend me a phonograph, and six records of hymns? Only six? It shall all go back when I am gone. Won’t you, Mr. Morrow? Won’t you?”

The preacher’s eyes filled with tears. He wished he were able to buy the phonograph, but he was a poor man because he gave so much time to his preaching.

“Give me your address, dear lad,” he said. “And we will pray that the music may come to you.”

Two evenings later Mr. Morrow sat in his study and wrote down the names of twenty-five of the richest men he knew.

One was the name of a man who had many millions of dollars.

To those twenty-five men he wrote letters about the boy far down South who was dying in loneliness and poverty. He wrote how brave the boy was, and how he trusted in God. He told of his great longing for music; how he had sung in the choir until his illness came, and how his one prayer now was for hymns; — only six.

Mr. Morrow closed his letter by asking for a loan for that Southern boy, a loan of money to buy a phonograph and six records of hymns.

“But they will all send phonographs,” said his wife. “What will you do, then?”

“There are many lonely souls who need music,” said the preacher. “If we get more than one gift, I will ask if we may send it to some other. And if not, we will return it.”

So the letters were sent.

Days passed. The busy preacher did not notice at first that no answers came. Two

weeks passed. Then his wife said anxiously, "Why don't we get any answers to your letters about the phonograph?" Another week passed. It was now the week before Christmas.

At last one letter came. And it was from the man who had many millions. The preacher opened it with a glad heart, for he felt sure there would be a check within. "Perhaps there will be a big check," he thought, "for little extra comforts for the poor lad."

He opened the letter. There was no check. The letter from the man of millions said:

"MY DEAR SIR:

"I regret exceedingly that I cannot accede to your request. But the demands upon my resources at this time are so great that I cannot afford any further benefactions.

"Yours very truly,"

The preacher dropped the letter on the desk, and laid his head down on his arms. The room was very still.

Presently Mrs. Morrow came in. She saw her husband's head, low on the desk. Swiftly she crossed the room, saw the letter lying there, and read it. Then she, too, dropped it. One hand went to her heart. The other touched her husband's bent head.

And the room was very, very still.

That evening Mr. Morrow had to speak in a big church in New York. And he spoke of "Selfishness."

He spoke, low and tenderly, of the great unselfish love of the Heavenly Father, who gives us the whole marvelous world for our own.

He spoke of the pure and perfect love of Jesus, who gave us his life that we might find our way to Heaven.

He said that we should love each other as Christ had loved us. "But," he said,

“how hard our hearts are! How selfish men can be! Those who have all the world can give, will not share even a little of their plenty with those who have nothing!”

Then he told the congregation about the lonely Southern boy and his prayer for a phonograph. And about the man of millions who said he could not *afford* to help.

It was a wonderful sermon. People were wiping their eyes, and clearing their throats.

The preacher thought, “Perhaps here there are kind hearts. Some one of these well-dressed men or women will surely wait for me after the service, and offer me money for the sick lad.”

He stood at the church door with the minister of the church. The long file of men and women passed him, shaking his hand and telling him that they were glad he had come.

When the last one had passed through the door, the preacher noticed a boy of

eight or nine years, with a man, who had lingered at one side. The man said, "My little son wants to speak to you, Sir."

The preacher looked kindly down at the little lad.

"How do you do, my boy?" he said. "What is your name?"

"I am Robert Allyn," the boy said. "I sing in the choir." Then, before the preacher could say anything more, he said eagerly, "Mr. Morrow, is it too late to send *my* phonograph to your friend in the South?"

For just a moment the preacher stood wordless.

"I have a phonograph," the little boy said. "And more than six records of hymns. Is it too late?"

Slowly, the preacher put his arm round the boy's shoulders. Questioningly he looked at the father, standing behind.

"It is his phonograph," said the father, gently. "If he has it in his heart to give

it, I shall not say 'No.'” The preacher raised his head. His arm tightened about the boy’s shoulders.

“It is not too late,” he said. “Send your phonograph, Robert, and God bless you for your unselfish love.”

Christmas Eve came to the bare and lonely room where the Southern boy sat by his little grate fire. He had not been out for several days, for he was now too weak to walk outside the room.

It was dusk. For four long weeks he had hoped and waited, believing that the magic phonograph would come. It had not come. And almost his brave heart gave up hope. Almost, but not yet. Once more he prayed, “Dear God, please let it come, before I die.”

The door opened. His aunt, her tired face shining with excitement, cried out, “Larry, dear, here is the minister, and he has a great box with him. Maybe it is the music box you want so much.”

Trembling, Larry stood up. Quickly the kind minister of his church came to him. "It *is* the phonograph, Lad," he said. "I have a letter from Mr. Morrow, and another for you, from the person that sent it. Bob, here, will have it set up in a minute."

"O God, I thank thee," whispered the boy. But aloud he spoke gratefully to the minister and courteously to the colored man who brought in the big box.

After that it was like a dream, a dream of happiness. For almost in no time the phonograph stood at the arm of his chair and a flat box of records was open beside it.

And in the thin white hands was an open letter, in a round, boyish writing. It read:

MY DEAR FRIEND:

"I am sorry you are sick. I hope you will enjoy the phonograph. Mr. Morrow says you like the hymns because you used to

sing in the choir. I sing in the choir, too. Some of these records are hymns. I send you the phonograph with all my heart.

“Yours truly

“ROBERT ALLYN”

“It’s a boy’s letter,” the sick boy said. “A little boy’s letter! What a wonderful, wonderful thing for a boy to do! God bless him!”

“To-morrow you can write him a Christmas letter,” said the minister. “Drink this chicken broth, now. My wife sent it over. And I want to hear your wonderful phonograph.”

Aunt Keenah stirred the soft coal fire and it glowed cheerfully. She lighted two more candles and the room was filled with light and warmth. The hot broth tasted like kindness itself.

The minister wound up the motor and placed a record.

And suddenly in the quiet room rose the

melody of blended voices, sweet, trained and clear:

"The first Noel the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep!"

It was the Choir of Trinity Church singing the old Christmas Carols.

Oh, the dear familiar sweetness of it! Larry's face flushed deeper still, and his great eyes shone with joy.

"It's such a *good* phonograph!" he whispered hoarsely. "I do hope the dear little chap isn't missing it."

On sang the melodious voices. One carol after another rang and sang through the room. And the deep chimes of Trinity struck their bells into the harmony.

"It is like Heaven," murmured the sick boy.

By and by the minister said, "Good night. Happy Christmas to you, dear Lad!" and went away.

Aunt Keenah sat down by the fire and put on the records one after another. Larry lay back on his couch chair and shut his eyes. He was so comfortable, so warm, so happy! The troublesome cough seemed to have gone away like a miracle. Only his heart felt big — so big, and crowded with joy and gratitude! So big —

The room was full of music. It soared and sang. It led Larry and his aunt away in dreams, far away from trouble and pain and sorrow, into the land of joy and beauty.

And somewhere in that land of joy and beauty, the sick boy's brave spirit was suddenly set free. The tired heart stopped beating, and Larry's soul sped away on its glad journey Home.

Just a week later, on New Year's Eve, Robert received this letter in the mail from Mr. Morrow.

DEAR LITTLE ROBERT ALLYN:

“Your phonograph is coming back to you. Its work is done, and it was just in time. The dear boy you sent it to, died happy, listening to the hymns he loved. His minister wrote to me that he said, God bless you! And I know He will, for you have loved your brother more than your own desire, and ‘so fulfilled the law of Christ.’

“Yours most affectionately

“R. L. MORROW”

That is the true story of the Christmas Gift. Many might have given it, and they did not. One only gave — a child. That the sweetness of the example of his giving might not die, but live, this story is written. His name was not Robert Allyn, but his heart was the heart of the little boy in this story.

And “of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”



A TRIP TO THE COUNTRY

ONE clear, bright Saturday morning in October the Brown family were getting ready for a day's outing.

Betty and Bobby kept saying, "Where are we going?"

But Father and Mother only smiled and said, "Wait and see."

"Are we going on the train?" said Bobby.

"No, on the electrics," said Daddy.

And at eleven o'clock they were on the short, yellow car which ran from Old Town to New Town. In five minutes more they got off at a small Junction Station.

In another few minutes the great Ex-

press Electric came along, and to the children's delight they got into that. The Junction was the only stop for many miles, and now they knew they were going out in the country.

"We are going to Aunt Emily's! *Aren't* we going to Aunt Emily's?" said Betty.

"Right," said Daddy. And the children settled down to entire happiness.

The car hummed along past busy streets, through long stretches of vegetable gardens, past blue ponds, up hills into new towns, down hills into new farms. Each child sat next a window, and both looked without blinking. There was so much to see! A pony in a field; a whole yard full of turkeys, with one gobbler making himself into a regular Thanksgiving post card; a gaily dressed wedding party in an automobile; a wonderful waterfall by a bridge.

The journey lasted a whole hour, with only two stops.

Then, all at once, the conductor called,

“Wells Corner!” and they were getting out.

There was Aunt Emily, in her shiny little closed car, waiting for them. She was not a real aunt; she was one of mother’s school friends who had been in Paris with her long ago. But she loved to have them call her Aunt Emily, and they loved to do it.

They went humming along again, this time in a soft warm seat.

Soon they were at Auntie Emily’s low, white house, with its small bright windows. It was a house that made you think of blazing log-fires and tables full of dinners, and people laughing.

Aunt Emily’s husband was at the open door. The two boys were close behind. Country living seemed to have made them bigger and rosier than Betty and Bobby.

Coats were soon off, the handshakes were over, and so were the few minutes when you stood around and had nothing to say. And then they all had plenty to say,

and dinner was ready — and *how* hungry they were!

Country pork; country vegetables; country apple sauce; dear, dear, you wouldn't believe a boy of Bobby's size could eat so much without swelling somewhere! But Bobby, and Freddie and Junior only looked a little redder in the cheeks and a little brighter in the eyes.

Even when ice-cream came on, made of honest-to-goodness cream, those boys were still hungry. They ate as much as any one, though they certainly had a much longer start than the others. And Betty, who never kept up with Bobby, finished her plate clean.

All the time the sun came brighter and the air grew warmer and sweeter.

So, right away after dinner, the children got ready to go out.

"I thought Betty and Bobby might like to go butternutting," said Aunt Emily. "The boys know where there are two enor-

mous trees, and it is perfectly safe. Our pasture road goes directly to the grove."

"Butternuts!" exclaimed Daddy Brown. "I haven't tasted any for years. It is my favorite of all nuts."

"Then do let them get all they can, to carry home," said Mr. Turnbull. "We always have quantities more than we can use, and we really can't spare time to pick them to give away."

The children clapped their hands. Mr. Brown sprang up. "Do you mind if I go too, you folks?" he said.

The children whooped joyously.

"I'll come, too," said Mr. Turnbull, getting his Mackinaw.

Off they started, through the soft, sweet air, the springy turf under their feet. The collie dog raced around them. The squirrels chattered at them. Red barberries and blue juniper berries peeped at them. Wild apples smelled cidery on the ground. It was nice, on the pasture road.

Did you ever see a butternut tree? These were giants, and the ground was loaded with nuts. Big, rough, three-cornered nuts they were, strange to the Brown children.

Junior cracked two of the nuts and gave them to Betty and Bobby. They were delicious!

Betty went to work at once, to fill her bag. "Yummie!" she said, "I'm going to get all I can!" "Yummie" was Betty's highest word of praise for things to eat.

Bobby began to crack more nuts, on a big stone. He was not putting any in his bag.

In a few minutes Mr. Brown called to Bobby, and they stood a little way off, talking in low tones. Then Bobby ran back, picked up his bag, and began working like a beaver to fill it with butternuts. Soon his bag was bulging out even fatter than Betty's. It was hard to beat Bobby when he really tried. But Father's bag bulged fattest of all.

“We’ve got two bushels in the attic,” said Freddie. “There’s another tree near the barn.”

“We get more than we can use,” said Junior, “and mother lets us take the extras over to John Sloan’s house. He has no butternut trees, but he has a sugar bush — sugar maple trees, you know. He gives us maple sugar for the butternuts, and we make candy. We made some for supper to-night.”

“Oh, don’t you want our bags for Mr. Sloan?” said Betty, with a worried look.

“Sakes, no!” said Junior. “What you are picking up is just saved from wasting. We pick up all we want to, and the squirrels get the rest.”

It was splendid fun out there on the hill, under the great nut trees. The two fathers made jokes; Collie came racing up every little while, full of secrets he could not tell; the nuts were big and easy to gather. Nobody was tired.

Daddy's bag was full first, then Bobby's, then Mr. Turnbull's and Betty's together. Fred and Junior were last, because it was an old story to them, and they had stopped oftener to chase Collie and run races with each other.

After nutting, the children took turns riding on the farm horse, who walked sedately for them round the garden path and through the orchard. They helped feed the big flock of snowy white hens and chickens. The roosters were very grand in sleek white and showy red combs.

At twilight they were called in for an early tea, as they had the long trip home to make.

Aunt Emily and Mother Brown had set a low table by the fire in the long living-room. On it was a fat blue jug of steaming cocoa, a brown and gold pot of tea for the grown-ups, a blue bowl of cream cheese, and two jars of jam, one of gooseberry and the other of blackberry. Each person made

his own toast over the glowing fire. Nothing ever tasted better.

Last came a plate of delicious maple-nut candy, which Junior was proud to tell he had made without help. It was a feast of food, friendship, and merriment — a real festival.

But, too soon, they were saying good-bye and telling every one how much they had enjoyed the day. Then they were humming back to Wells Corner in the little Sedan, with Mr. Turnbull at the wheel, this time, and then they were once more in the Express Electric.

The bags of butternuts were heavy, getting off the Express and climbing on to the small car. They grew heavier still on the walk home. It was quite dark when Father turned the key in the front door of Home. And Betty and Bobby were glad to set their treasures down in the pantry and make haste to their beds.

“It’s been a perfectly wonderful day,

Mummie and Daddy," said Betty, sleepily.

"Thank you a thousand times."

"Thank you a thousand times, too,"
echoed Bob, from his room at the head of
the stairs.

And that happy day was over.



THE WISE LITTLE AUTOMOBILE

ONCE there was a Little Black Automobile. It had a short, stubby nose and two round bright eyes. Sometimes it shut one eye, and winked at a Policeman. The Policeman always came and spoke to its Driver, when the Little Automobile winked. The Little Automobile looked very sad when the Policeman came, but as soon as he went away it winked again.

The Little Automobile had a Merry Young Driver. They went on many drives together, and understood each other very well. The Merry Young Driver never for-

got to give the Little Automobile a good big drink of cool water when it got hot from running. And he never forgot that the Little Automobile's gas tank was small; he filled it often.

Sometimes he did get cross when the Little Automobile winked its eye at the Policeman. He said, "If I could once find out what ails that blinking lamp of yours I'd give a dollar."

But he never did find out. So he kept his dollar.

And the Little Automobile was faithful and good. It ran and ran, on its four little wheels, wherever he wanted it to go, up hill, down hill, *zuzzy zuzz, zuzz, all the day long.* It stopped the instant he wanted it to stop, *zziz.*

Close beside the Little Automobile in the garage at night stood a Big Gray Automobile. Its driver was big and gray, too. He was not so merry as the Young Driver. A small, Gray Lady drove with him often.

The Big Gray Automobile was also faithful and good. It went, quietly, quietly, on its four big wheels, wherever its driver wanted. It stopped, quietly, quietly, whenever its driver wanted.

But one day something broke in the Big Gray Automobile's works. The man who mends broken automobile works said, "It will take two days to mend this."

"We can't wait two days," said the Big Gray Driver. "We were going to the Cape to-day." He was very sorry.

"Take my car," said the Merry Young Driver. "It is little, but it goes. I don't need it for two days."

"Oh, we couldn't do that, it would rob you," said the small Gray Lady.

"Not at all," said the Merry Young Driver. "Please take it."

The Little Automobile wanted very much to go to the Cape. It always wanted to go everywhere, *zuzzy, zuzz zuzz*. It stood firmly on its small wheels, and looked very

reliable with its small nose, to show the Big Gray Driver how good it was.

So the Gray Driver and his Gray Lady thanked the Merry Young Driver very much, and took the Little Automobile.

The Merry Young Driver filled the gas tank and gave the Little Automobile a big drink. He said,

“Don’t forget to give her water. She’s no camel, like yours.” (Camels go a long time on one drink.) The Little Automobile chuckled. It admired the Big Gray Car, but it did like a joke.

“We will not forget,” said the Gray Lady, smiling.

So they started off, *zuzzy, zuzz zuzz*, for the Cape.

Somehow the Big Gray Driver and his small Gray Lady grew merry as they drove in the Little Automobile. Soon they were laughing and joking, just like Young Drivers. Maybe it was the Little Automobile that did it. They had a beautiful time, and so did the Little Automobile.

But the Gray Driver was used to a Big Gray Automobile with a big, big gas tank. The Big Gray Automobile could run for miles and miles, all day long, without using all the gas in its tank. The Big Gray Driver forgot that the Little Automobile's gas tank was so small, so very, very small.

Twilight came. The Little Automobile was at a fork in the roads. To the right, the main road led smoothly along through some bright little towns; houses and farms and shops showed in the distance. To the left, the country road wound away, promising beautiful fields and woods and a glowing sunset.

The Driver said to the Gray Lady, "Both roads lead to Capeville, where we planned to spend the night. Which shall we take?"

The Little Automobile grieved. "Oh," it thought, "why don't they look in my tank? Of course, we must take the town road! Dear, dear!"

The Lady hesitated. "The woods road is prettier," she said, "but perhaps it is too long?"

"Oh, no," said the Driver. "We can get to Capeville before dark."

"Can we?" thought the Little Automobile. "Can we, indeed! If you looked in my tank you wouldn't talk like that!"

"Well, which shall it be?" said the Driver, smiling. "I don't care."

The Little Automobile was desperate. Then it had a thought. The town road started down hill; the country road started up hill. Suddenly, the Little Automobile began to slide gently down hill; the Driver had forgotten the brake for a moment.

The Lady said, laughingly, "There, the little car has decided on the town road! Let it be that way."

So they drove along, down hill, *zuzzy* — *zuzz* — *zuzz*!

The Little Automobile tried and tried to tell the Driver about its tank. But he

wasn't used to the Little Automobile's whisper; he did not listen. The Merry Young Driver would have heard it, at once.

On and on they drove. The Little Automobile ran faster and faster, desperately trying to get somewhere — somewhere. Now he was *almost* there. Ah! It was no use! He — could — not —

Suddenly, the Little Automobile slowed, and stopped. Quite gently, without the least splutter, it stopped.

“Why, what can be the matter?” said the Gray Lady. “Nothing has sounded wrong.”

The Driver groaned. “I don't know a thing about these engines,” he said. “It might be anything. But I'll take a look.”

“You know all about the Gray Car,” said the Lady, hopefully.

“That's different,” said the Driver. “I don't know what to look for, in this one.”

All at once the Lady said, “Dear! You

don't *suppose* we could be out of gas, do you?"

"No, we filled up at noon," said the Driver.

"Yes, but perhaps this tank is so very small?" said the Lady.

"That's so!" said the Driver. "I'll have a look." The next minute he was looking. And then he said, "Well, well; that's all that's the matter; we are out of gas."

Suddenly the Lady began to laugh. She laughed so loudly and merrily that the Driver was quite startled.

"Look, dear, *look!*" the Lady said. "Just look where we are!"

The Driver looked. They were almost at the very entrance of a gasoline station! Just a few steps away were the bright red posts and tanks, and the little office building.

"Well, I never!" said the Driver. "What luck!"

But the Lady kept on laughing. "The blessed, wise Little Black Automobile,"

she said. "It wouldn't let us go on the country road, and it brought us almost to the gas tank, before it gave out!"

"Wouldn't we have been in a mess if we had taken the country road!" said the Driver.

He walked over to the gasoline station and got gas, and filled the Little Automobile's tank.

While he was doing it the Lady spoke in a murmur to the Little Automobile. There was a laugh in her voice and it was very pleasant sounding. She said,

"You dear, funny, smart little car, I shall always be fond of you, after this."

The Little Black Automobile was proud as proud. When the tank was full and the Driver started the engine, it started off with a long chuckle of satisfaction.

"Zuzz-zuzz-zuzzy-zuzz-zuzz!" it said.

And it thought, "I am a wise little car! I am smart, I am! Ha, won't I have fun with the Policemen to-night? Won't I just wink my eye? Oh, my! Zuzzy-zuzz-zuzz!"



SNOWDROP

A NEW VERSION OF AN OLD TALE

IVAN and Ivanola were peasant folk who lived in a small house at the end of the village where the great fields begin.

They had no children, neither boys nor girls. And that was a grief to them both. They would have liked either boys or girls, but most they wished for a daughter.

When the first snow of winter came, one year, it came in great starry flakes, wonderful to see. It fell, and fell, not like first snows, but like mid-winter snows. Soon it was deep, and sparkling white and crystal clear. The day was a holiday, and all the

village people were out, playing in the snow. Some had snowball fights, and some built houses and forts.

Ivan built a snow man, to make the children of the neighbors laugh.

But Ivanola was building something different.

"What are you building, Little Mother," said Ivan.

"I am building a Snow Maiden," said Ivanola, dreamily. "She is so pretty, Ivan!"

The Snow Maiden was so pretty that Ivan left his snow man and came to help. Together they worked till the Snow Maiden stood there, quite perfect and done. She was so pretty that they loved her.

"Oh, if we had a little daughter just like her!" said Ivanola, sighing.

"Yes, a little girl, lovely like her," said Ivan, sighing, too.

"What have you made there?" said a strange voice, suddenly.

Ivan and Ivanola looked up and saw a stranger; an old woman in a gray cloak, with bright, bright eyes.

“We have made a Snow Maiden, with the help of God,” said Ivanola, “to fill our empty hearts, in play.”

“Ah, yes,” said the old woman, “empty hearts need filling, by the help of God. Have you a bit of warm food to spare for a traveler?”

Ivan and Ivanola were very hospitable people. They shared their hot soup with the traveler, and gave her a place by the warm stove to rest and eat.

When she went on her way, Ivanola said, “God be with you.”

“And fill your hearts,” said the old woman. As she spoke, she opened her gray cloak. Its folds touched the Snow Maiden, and seemed to linger there a moment. Then the old woman was gone.

But the Snow Maiden was moving! Before the eyes of Ivan and Ivanola she

turned to flesh and blood, and moved, and spoke. She was white as snow, and pink as dawn; her eyes were blue as the winter sky, her hair as black as the winter night. Never was a maiden more fair.

Ivan and Ivanola took her to their empty hearts and to their home. They called her "Snowdrop," and loved her dearly.

In a day and a night, Snowdrop had grown in looks and speech to be a maiden of about fifteen. So she remained.

She was a merry girl, and most gentle. Her feet moved so lightly that it was like a breeze, blowing. Her voice was clear as crystal, but soft as distant bells. She danced quite wonderfully.

All the village girls and boys were entranced with Snowdrop. They loved her for her beauty, her dancing, but most of all for her gentle merry ways.

So it came about that the house of Ivan and Ivanola was always filled with young people, come to talk and play with Snow-

drop. The evenings were gay with singing and dancing and laughter.

At last the long, long winter was past. The snow melted, the sun rose high, the birds came back, one by one. Every one was wild with joy, for the winter in those lands is bitter and long.

No one but Ivanola noticed any change in Snowdrop. But to Ivanola it seemed that Snowdrop's dawn-pink cheeks were fading; her light step seemed listless, and her laughter had a sound of sadness hidden in it.

"What is wrong, my darling, my pretty one?" Ivanola would say.

But Snowdrop only kissed her and said, "Nothing is wrong, dear one, all is well."

The great festival of Spring came. Snowdrop must be the center of all games, the chosen of all dancers. The boys and girls were all eager for her company. They did not see that she was growing pale and wistful. They did not see her step falter or notice how slight she was.

And at last they came to the maddest merriest game of the festival season; the, fire dance.

A bon-fire was built. All the youths and maidens danced around it, singing and clapping their hands. Then, one after another, in turn, each ran forward and leaped over the fire, through the grasping flames.

There was great laughter and clapping and calling of names. No one wanted to be thought afraid. The boldest, highest jumps were much applauded.

Snowdrop drew away. Her blue eyes grew wistful and she looked afraid and troubled.

But the youths and maidens ran after her and took her cold white hands and pulled her back.

"It is your turn, Snowdrop!" they cried. "Snowdrop must jump over the fire now. Leap, Snowdrop, leap!"

Out of the circle of laughing, clapping boys and girls Snowdrop ran, so lightly that

she seemed to float. But her hands were over her eyes. She leaped, over the flames.

And, behold, she was gone! She was not anywhere.

“Where is Snowdrop? Where did she go? Is she hiding?” cried the boys and girls.

But though they sought her long, she never came again.

Ivan and Ivanola grieved sorely at first.

But the girls and boys of the village had grown so used to come to their house, to see Snowdrop, that they came now to chat and sing with Ivan and Ivanola. The house was still full of young life. So the hearts were no more empty; and by and by the memory of Snowdrop became as a happy dream.

When the Second Spring came round, Ivanola found one day a little, white, starry flower growing on the spot where the fatal fire had burned, that other Spring. She stooped to pick it, and as she looked into its lovely petals, she seemed to see

her Snowdrop's white, white forehead and dawn pink cheeks.

"Ah, what flower are you?" she whispered.

And the flower seemed to answer, to her heart,

"I am Snowdrop."

So the little white flower that comes to bless the earth just as the snow melts, is called "Snowdrop" unto this day.



THE VISITOR

A STORY IN VERSE

I HAD a pretty little house
As tidy as a pin.

There was a place for everything
And each its place was in.

There was a place for spoon and fork,
A place for broom and pan,
A place for books, a place for hooks,
And all was spick and span.

Whene'er I used a fork or spoon,
A pen, a pan, a broom,

I put it back when I had done,
Just where I took it from.

So all went cheerily and well,
And though my house was small,
It always had just room enough
For me, my friends, and all.

A visitor there came to me,
All in the month of May.
She staid a week, and then a week,
A fortnight and a day.

She said she loved my little house,
So neat by night or day.
She said she loved to help me work
And put my things away.

But, oh, she put my tidy things
In every sort of place!
My books and hooks and brooms and pans
Began to run a race.

They moved from shelf and closet out
To table and to chair.

They moved from chair and table till
They were just everywhere.

Whene'er I went to get a spoon
There lay a fork instead.
And if I sought a tablecloth
I found it on the bed.

The books were on the writing desk,
The ink was on the floor,
The boots were on the dresser
And the rugs behind the door.

There was no room to move about,
So many things were there.
There was no room to sit or stand
Or lie down, anywhere!

There was no room for work or play,
No room for friends, at all.
My visitor began to say,
"Is not your house too small?"

“I thought it far more roomy when
I saw it first, my dear.
But that it is too small for you
Has now become quite clear.

“I really think ’twere wiser, far,
To sell this tiny cot
And buy yourself an ampler home
In some more worthy spot.”

Alas, alas, her words seemed true,
For as I looked about,
I felt myself all crowded up,
And almost crowded out.

But suddenly a happy thought
Put all my fears to shame:
“*The little house was big enough
For me, before she came!*”

And so we said polite good-byes.
But, oh, I did *not* say,
“Be sure to visit me again,
When next you come this way!”

For no one loves a visitor
Who spoils a tidy home.
And no one sighs to see him go,
Or smiles to see him come.

So if you would be welcome
Wherever you may go,
Be sure to act as you would like
A guest to act with you.

Don't leave a mess behind you
For other folks to clean.
Don't write your autograph in dirt,
Wherever you have been.

But make each place a nicer place
Because you have been there;
Leave cleanliness and order
Behind you everywhere.

When you have read a friendly book
Replace it on the shelf.
If you have tracked a little dirt,
Just brush it up, yourself.

If you would help your friend at work,
 Take note where things belong.
 It's better not to help at all
 Than help to do things wrong.

And if you go to picnic
 In God's great Out-of-Doors,
 Remember, you are just a guest
 On Nature's woodland floors.

Don't spoil her lovely carpets
 By leaving rubbish there.
 But treat her rooms so carefully
 That they are still as fair

For other visitors to see
 And take their pleasure in.
 To use the woods is right and good;
 To spoil them is a sin.

So please remember, children dear,
 The rule of friendly living
 Is, "Freely take the joys of life,
 But be as free in giving."

And whether you remain at home,
Or roam the world around it,
Leave every place a little bit
Better than you found it!

THE END



